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Vol. 7 No. 01 Monday 14th February 2011

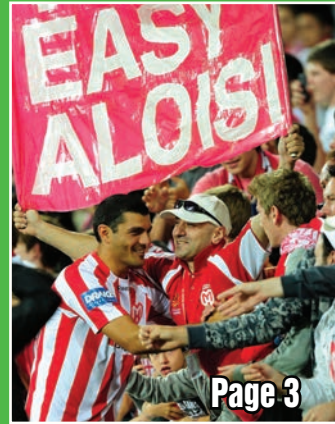


PHOTO: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

**SERIOUS
IN A LEAGUE
OF THEIR OWN!**
ROAR ROMPS TO PREMIER'S PLATE

INSIDE

**ALL THE A-LEAGUE
FINAL DAY ACTION**



Page 3

**W-LEAGUE
GRAND FINAL**



Page 7

**VPL KICK OFF - CLUB
BY CLUB PREVIEWS**



Page 11

BFTP: THE DOC IN OZ



Page 27

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE

		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Brisbane Roar	30	18	11	1	58	26	32	65
2	CC Mariners	30	16	9	5	50	31	19	57
3	Adelaide United	30	15	5	10	51	36	15	50
4	Gold Coast United	30	12	10	8	40	32	8	46
5	Melbourne Victory	30	11	10	9	45	39	6	43
6	Wellington Phoenix	30	12	5	13	39	41	-2	41
7	Newcastle Jets	30	9	8	13	29	34	-5	35
8	Melbourne Heart	30	8	11	11	32	42	-10	35
9	Sydney FC	30	8	10	12	35	40	-5	34
10	Perth Glory	30	5	8	17	27	54	-27	23
11	North Qld Fury	30	4	7	19	28	60	-32	19

WEEKEND RESULTS

Adelaide United (Paul REID 6', Travis DODD 78')	2	Wellington Phoenix (Chris GREENACRE 7', Dylan MACALLISTER 11', Danny VUKOVIC 90'+3 (pen))	3
Melbourne Victory (Archie THOMPSON 65')	1	North Qld Fury (Brett STUDMAN 66')	1
Melbourne Heart (Rutger WORM 41', John ALOISI 62')	2	CC Mariners (Patricio PEREZ 89')	1
Sydney FC (Nick CARLE 35' (pen)/88')	2	Newcastle Jets	0
Brisbane Roar (Kosta BARBAROUSES 3', Erik PAARTALU 42', HENRIQUE 65', Thomas BROICH 85')	4		
Gold Coast	0		

TOP GOAL SCORERS

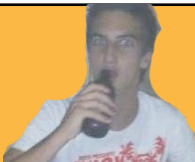
- 16 - Sergio VAN DIJK
11 - Kosta BARBAROUSES, Robbie KRUSE, Jean Carlos SOLORANZO
10 - Matt SIMON
9 - Bruno CAZARINE, Bruce DJITE, Robbie FOWLER, Adam KWASNIK
8 - John ALOISI, Marcos FLORES, Chris GREENACRE
7 - Paul IFILL, Dylan MacALLISTER, Gerald SIBON, Shane SMELTZ
6 - Alex BROSQUE, Tim BROWN, Mitch NICHOLS, Patricio PEREZ, Sasho PETROVSKI

NEXT WEEK

WEEK 1	HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE 2011 FINALS	VENUE	LOCAL	AEDT
Fri, 18 Feb 2011	Adelaide United vs. Wellington Phoenix	Hindmarsh Stdm	7:30pm	8:00pm
Sat, 19 Feb 2011	Central Coast Mariners vs. Brisbane Roar	Bluetongue Stdm	7:00pm	7:00pm
Sat, 20 Feb 2011	Gold Coast United vs. Melbourne Victory	Skilled Park	4:30pm	5:30pm

Finals 2011

JOHN CLARK'S KISS OF DEATH



Central Coast Vs Brisbane Roar

The A-League premiers, the Brisbane Roar, tackle the Central Coast Mariners at Bluetongue Stadium on Saturday night, in what should be an enthralling contest.

The Roar extended their unbeaten run to 25 games on Saturday night with an astonishing 4-0 victory over their cross town rivals, Gold Coast United. The Roar played brilliant football throughout and were even afforded the luxury of subbing off custodian Michael Theoklitos to give young keeper Andrew Redmayne his first appearance of the season.

The Central Coast showed great courage to oust the Jets 1-0 at Bluetongue Stadium on Sunday afternoon, with Patricio Perez's late goal enough to seal the three points for the Mariners.

These sides have a history of producing exciting contests, as was evident when they met back in January. The Mariners hit the lead, 3-2, against the 10 men Roar, but despite a numerical disadvantage on the pitch and on the scoreboard, the Roar were able to claw back to 3-3 all, and keep their unbeaten streak intact.

The Roar however will sweat on the fitness of four key players in Mitch Nichols who suffered a twisted ankle this week and the previously absent Massimo Muroccca, James Meyer and Jean Carlos Solorzano.

Provided that at least half of this star foursome is available, I see no reason that the Roar can't extend their unbeaten streak to 26, although they will probably be happy to come away with a share of the spoils in the away leg of semi final one.

Prediction
Brisbane Roar 1-1 Central Coast Mariners



Adelaide United Vs Wellington Phoenix

The A-League finals series kicks off on Friday night with Adelaide United hosting the Wellington Phoenix for the 2nd time in two weeks.

A fortnight ago it was the Phoenix who broke a duck at Hindmarsh Stadium, winning 1-0 thanks to a 34th strike by Chris Greenacre.

The Reds however look to have regained some form after their 2-1 win over an in form Melbourne Victory outfit. It is fair to say that Adelaide's second half of the season has been patchy at best, but last Friday night they were able to secure a winner against the run of play to sow up third place on the table. All this was achieved without golden boot winner Sergio Van Dijk, making the win all the more impressive.

The Phoenix on the other hand went into the last day of the season requiring at least a point to assure that they would progress into the finals for the second year running. That was put beyond doubt with goals from Dylan Macallister and Chris Greenacre inside the first twelve minutes leaving the Fury shell shocked. From there it was a precession with keeper Danny Vukovic's sweetly struck penalty ensuring the Phoenix got away with 6th straight home win.

I expect this match to be a treat to watch and despite Wellington's recent win at Hindmarsh I expect the Reds to progress fairly comfortably on the back of the lightning quick attacking quartet of Dodd, Van Dijk, Slory and Flores.

Prediction:
Adelaide Unted too good at home 2-1.



Gold Coast Utd Vs Melbourne Victory

The Melbourne Victory will travel to Skilled Park on Sunday night, pending an A-League investigation into the state of the Gold Coast's pitch.

While cynics may suggest the possible change of venue may have more to do with revenue raising, rather than player safety, the Victory will certainly have little complaint if the match is moved to Etihad Stadium.

Melbourne has only lost one game there all season, which ironically happened to be against the Miron Bleiberg lead Gold Coast who came south seeking a draw, but were pleasantly surprised to leave with all 3 points courtesy of Roddy Vargas own goal.

The Victory was bought back down to earth last week with a 2-1 loss to usual whipping boys Adelaide United. Ernie Merrick employed an attacking line up, but the Victory's usual cutting edge was sadly lacking until Archie Thompson was ably assisted by partner in crime Danny Allsopp to fashion an equaliser for the away team. Unfortunately for the Victory that score line didn't last for long as their frailty at set pieces was once again exposed and the unmarked Travis Dodd gave Adelaide the win.

The Gold Coast was once again shown just how much improvement is needed to be competitive in this A-League finals series. After being smashed 3-1 at home by the Central Coast during the week, they were once again turned over by the all conquering Brisbane Roar 4-0. While Michael Thwaite did his best to turn the attention away from his side by criticising the opposition coach, a lot of work has to be done to make sure that the Gold Coast remain competitive this week and not fold limply like they did in the second half against Brisbane.

It is hard to see a front third boasting Kruse, Allsopp, Hernandez, Thompson, Pondeljak, Angulo and Duganzdic not scoring goals. Although the Gold Coast has been rock solid at the back throughout the season, I get the impression that they are really struggling without inspirational leader Jason Culina. Even though I think that result of the FFA finding, on whether Skilled Park is suitable for finals football, will have a large bearings on the match I still think the Victory should escape with a win, home or away.

Prediction
Melbourne Victory 2-1 Gold Coast United

BRISBANE ROAR



4

GOLD COAST UNITED



0

Brisbane Roar 4 (Kosta BARBAROUSES 3', Erik PAARTALU 42', HENRIQUE 66', Thomas BROICH 85')
Gold Coast United 0
Saturday, 12 February 2011
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
Referee: Peter Green
Assistant referees: Ashley Beecham & David Walsh
Fourth official: Jarred Gillett
Crowd: 20,831

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael THEOKLITOS (gk) (20. Andrew REDMAYNE (gk) 80'), 2. Matt SMITH, 4. Shane STEFANUTTO, 5. Ivan FRANJIC, 6. Erik PAARTALU, 7. Kosta BARBAROUSES, 10. HENRIQUE (19. Chris BUSH 67'), 15. Matt McKay (c), 17. Mitch NICHOLS (14. Rocky VISCONTE 59'), 22. Thomas BROICH, 23. Milan SUSAK
Substitutes Not Used: 12. Matt MUNDY
Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil

Gold Coast United: 1. Glen MOSS (gk), 2. Steve PANTELIDIS, 3. Michael THWAITE (c), 6. Dino DJULBIC, 7. Zenon CARAVELLA, 8. ANDERSON, 9. Shane SMELTZ, 15. Tahj MINNIECON (32. Steven LUSTICA 78'), 16. Kristian REES (23. Steve FITZSIMMONS 74'), 22. Adama TRAORE, 33. Peter PERCHTOLD.
Substitutes: 20. Scott HIGGINS (gk), 27. Chris HAROLD
Yellow Cards: Steve PANTELIDIS 36', Zenon CARAVELLA 55'
Red Cards: Nil



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Roar Romps It In Style!

By Jarrod Ellis

BRISBANE Roar returned to Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night and turned in a performance befitting that of A-League Premiers, dismantling Gold Coast United 4-0 to round out their regular season.

After an enforced absence due to the repairs needed at their home ground the Roar were greeted by an adoring home crowd of 20,831 keen to see their side stretch their record unbeaten run to 25 matches.

The opening moments of the match were a nervy affair on behalf of both sides, but that tentativeness that so often afflicts derby matches was soon dispelled by some sterling work from Brisbane's Kosta Barbarouses.

The young kiwi striker collected the ball on the edge of the area, awkwardly spinning away from three defenders to make space before burying a shot into the upper right hand corner of Glen Moss' goal.

Barbarouses was in the thick of the action early on and found himself through the defence in the 9th minute after a quality through ball from Erik Paartalu. However pressure from Kristian Rees and an onrushing Moss were enough to deny the striker a second goal.

Moss was called into action again only minutes later as Barbarouses and Henrique tormented the Gold Coast defence before the ball bobbed to Thomas Broich on the edge of the area. The German firing a low shot at goal that was well held.

Gold Coast were struggling to exert any influence on the match and took their first shot on goal in the 14th minute, Anderson sending a long range shot comfortably wide of Theoklitos' post.

Long range strikes appeared to be the weapon of choice for Gold Coast going forward, Adama Traore and Zenon Caravella drawing a roar from the home crowd as they blasted efforts into the stands.

Brisbane looked close to finding a second goal in the 36th minute but United's Moss pulled off a diving save against Thomas Franjic who blasted a trademark effort from outside the box after the ball was played square by Broich at a free kick.

Both sides continued to trade shots, Tahj Minniecon testing Theoklitos yet again but the keeper remained up to the task as he calmly collected a looping effort.

The Roar's dominance continued to pay dividends and they soon had their second of the night, courtesy of a goal of the season contender from towering midfielder Erik Paartalu.

After a well-timed cross from Broich, Paartalu hammered a stunning, left-footed volley past Moss to give his side the assurance of a two-goal buffer heading into the break.

With proceedings threatening to become a one-way procession Gold Coast began the second half with renewed vigour and had the best of the early opportunities.

Shane Smeltz first sent a powerful shot from a free kick crashing into the crossbar before Ander-



Kosta Barbarouses smashes the ball into the onion bag after only three minutes. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

son's long-range strike forced a parry away from Theoklitos, but the Roar defence held strong.

Brisbane continued to toil however and were finally rewarded for their enterprising play when fan favourite Henrique found the back of the net.

The Brazilian bursting into the area to hit a rising shot into the roof of the Gold Coast net to all but kill off the game.

From then onwards it was all one-way traffic, Brisbane seemingly threatening the visitor's goal at will and it came as no surprise to anyone watching when the home side added a fourth to complete the rout.

Matt McKay delivered the final goal of the match to Thomas Broich in the 83rd minute. The two midfielders toying with the United defence, McKay going one-on-one with Moss at the far post before sliding a ball across the face

of goal to find a lone Broich inside the area and experiencing no trouble sliding the ball into the net.

The remainder of the match passed without incident and the season high crowd erupted after the match as Brisbane were presented with the Premiers' Plate.

After the game Brisbane Roar coach Ange Postecoglou claimed he couldn't be happier about his side's performance, praising their efforts throughout the season.

I thought it was a fitting way to end our regular season, we've been good all year and we've been better than anyone else and I think it was important to finish it off that way," he said.

I thought it was an accurate reflection on our season from start to finish so I am really proud of the players.

"I spoke before the game about making sure we finish it off in the right way and we did."



The all-conquering record-breaking Brisbane Roar enjoy the deserved spoils of the Premier's Plate. Inset: Thomas Broich puts the icing on the cake with his 85th minute finish. Photos: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

SHORT PASSES

Roar Dominates Short List for Players' Team of the Season

Brisbane Roar coach Ange Postecoglou and 10 members of his record breaking side head the 33 player and 4 coach shortlist for the 2010/2011 PFA A-League Team of the Season, Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) announced.

The team, as voted by A-League players, will be announced at the PFA Alex Tobin OAM Medal gala dinner to be held at Melbourne's Crown Palladium next Monday 14 February.

Championship contenders Central Coast Mariners (5 players) and Adelaide United (6) also feature in the short list, with their coaches, Graham Arnold and Rini Coolen, also nominated. Players from 10 of the 11 A-League clubs have been recognised.

The team is selected in a 4-3-3 formation with a further 5 players nominated as substitutes. The short list, which also includes 3 referees, is listed below.

Australia's football fans can join the players as they announce the team, honour Mark Viduka and help raise funds for the Queensland Premier's Floods Appeal.

The PFA Alex Tobin OAM Medal Night will take place tonight (Monday 14 February) at 7:00pm (AEST) at Crown's Palladium Ballroom. Tickets are \$195 pp (\$1950 a table) and further details can be found at www.pfa.net.au

SHORTLIST FOR PFA A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE SEASON

Goalkeepers (3): Glen Moss (Gold Coast United), Matthew Ryan (Central Coast Mariners), Michael Theoklitos (Brisbane Roar)

Defenders (12): Cassio (AUFC), Luke Devere (Roar), Tarek Elrich (Jets), Iain Fyfe (AUFC), Ivan Franjic (Roar), Scott Neville (Glory), Josh Rose (Mariners), Matt Smith (Roar), Michael Thwaite (Gold Coast), Nikolai Topor-Stanley (Jets), Adama Traore (Gold Coast), Patrick Zwaanswijk (Mariners)

Midfielders (9): Thomas Broich (Roar), Jason Culina (Gold Coast), Marcos Flores (AU), Carlos Hernandez (Victory), Michael McGlinchey (Mariners), Matt McKay (Roar), Mitch Nichols (Roar), Erik Paartalu (Roar), Kasey Wehrman (Jets)

Strikers (9): Kostas Barbarouses (Roar), Robbie Fowler (Glory), Paul Ifil (Phoenix), Robbie Kruse (Victory), Matthew Leckie (AUFC), Matthew Simon (Mariners), Jean Carlos Solozano (Roar), Sergio Van Dijk (AUFC), David Williams (Fury)

PFA A-League Coach of the Season (4): Graham Arnold (Mariners), Rini Coolen (AUFC), Ange Postecoglou (Roar), Franz Straka (Fury)

PFA A-League Referee of the Season (3): Matthew Breeze, Gerard Parsons, Ben Williams

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MELBOURNE HEART



SYDNEY FC



Match Details

Melbourne Heart 2 (Rutger WORM 41', John ALOISI 62') Sydney FC 2 (Nick CARLE 35' PENALTY, 88'). Saturday, 12 February 2011 AAMI Stadium, Melbourne Local kick-off: 7:00pm Referee: Ben WILLIAMS Assistant referees: James NICOLO-POULOS Shaun EVANS Fourth official: Lucien LAVERDURE Attendance: 6019

Melbourne Heart: 1.Clint BOLTON, 2.Michael MARRONE, 4.Simon COLO-SIMO, 6.Matt THOMPSON, 7.Rutger WORM (22.Nick KALMAR 73'), 9.Gerald SIBON, 10.Wayne SRHOJ, 14.Kamal IBRAHIM, 15.John ALOISI (8.Kristian SARKIES 83'), 16.Aziz BEHICH, 20.Josip SKOKO (5.Michael BEAUCHAMP 70'), 21.Kliment TASESKI, 23.Dean HEFFERNAN

Substitutes not used: 12.Peter ZOIS Yellow cards: Wayne SHROJ 20', Gerald SIBON 29', 45', Josip SKOKO 39', John ALOISI 62' Red cards: Gerald SIBON 45'

Sydney FC: 1. Liam REDDY, 2. Sebastian RYALL (22. Sung-Hwan BYUN 58'), 3. Stephan KELLER, 6. Hirofumi MORIYASU (7. Brendan GAN 81'), 9. Bruno CAZARINE, 10. Nick CARLE, 12. Shannon COLE (11. Kofi DAN-NING 70'), 15. Terry MCFLYNN (c), 17. Matt JURMAN, 18. Juho MAKELA, 20. Ivan NECEVSKI, 21. Scott JAMIESON

Substitutes not used: 20. Ivan NECEVSKI Yellow cards: Terry MCFLYNN 45 + 1' Red cards: Nil

Carle Breaks Hearts in Legends Farewell

By David Manuca

A late equaliser by Nick Carle secured Sydney FC a 2-2 draw against Melbourne Heart at AAMI Park on Saturday night.

It was meant to be a night of celebration for the careers of retiring John Aloisi and Josip Skoko, but Carle and Sydney FC spoiled the party with a goal late in the match.

Nick Carle put Sydney in-front in the 35th minute from the penalty spot after Skoko brought down Hiro Moriyasu in the box. Rutger Worm brought the Heart level just six minutes later before Aloisi scored his last ever goal in the 62nd minute to give Heart the lead. But Nick Carle spoiled the retiring hero's party with an equaliser in the 88th minute.

It was also a farewell game for the departing Gerald Sibon, but referee Ben Williams gave him his marching orders just before half-time after receiving a second yellow card.

Ben Williams also gave a yellow card for Skoko after his foul on Moriyasu and one to Aloisi after he took his shirt when celebrating his goal.

"I didn't care about getting a yellow card," said Aloisi.

"Who cares if you get suspended after the last game of your career? I'd thought about it during the week and thought if I scored a special goal, and I thought it was special, I'll take it off."

Josip Skoko wasn't to happy though with the referee's performance, stating the standard must improve.

"It's got to get better, the level. I think we've been down six or seven times this season to 10 men, and it wasn't for bad tack-



John Aloisi does what he does best for the last time and signs off on an exquisite career with a well taken finish. Photos: SYDNEY LOW

les," Skoko said.

"When someone puts in a bad tackle over knee-height, they don't get cautioned.

"A little bit of consistency maybe. Everyone makes mistakes, but it's all to do with the protection of the players and not making a spectacle of it in the wrong way."

Aloisi almost got Melbourne off to a perfect start early on in the match but his volley rocketed off the crossbar.

The game though was brought to life when Skoko fouled Hiro Moriyasu inside the box in the 34th minute. Nick Carle had no problems slotting away the penalty sending Clint Bolton the wrong way.

Sydney's lead didn't last long though as Rutger Worm soon

equalised. Skoko disposed Carle with the ball falling to Sibon, who played through Worm and the winger smashed home a shot giving Sydney keeper Liam Reddy no chance.

Sibon was given his marching orders just minutes later after receiving his second yellow of the game, and a pretty soft one. He was booked for unsporting behaviour when he kicked away the ball, believing a free-kick had been awarded to Heart rather than Sydney.

Heart came out the better of the two sides after the break and deservedly took the lead and who else to score than John Aloisi. Liam Reddy initially saved Wayne Shroj's effort, but Aloisi as always was lurking inside the box and he picked up the ball and

curled it right past Liam Reddy with a cracking effort.

The former Socceroo then ran to the crowd, taking off his jersey in similar fashion to when he sent Australia to the 2006 World Cup finals against Uruguay.

The retiring duo were then substituted with Skoko coming off in the 70th minute and Aloisi in the 82nd minute, receiving a standing ovation from the 6019 fans at AAMI Park.

But with 10-men Heart always risked conceding a goal and they did just that late in the match.

The Heart defence let Carle unleash a left-foot strike just on the edge of the area which scraped past Clint Bolton and went in off the far post.



Two modern legends of our game, Josip Skoko and John Aloisi, bring the curtain down on their careers. Photos: DANIEL FLIS



John Aloisi takes his top off for one final time after scoring the 117th goal of his illustrious career. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

SHORT PASSES

Football West And Perth Glory Join Forces For Floods

Football West is pleased to announce that a special fundraising match between the WA State team and Perth Glory will take place on Saturday 19 February at Carnarvon's Festival Grounds.

WA legend and former Socceroo Robbie Dunn will coach the WA side made up of players from the All Flags State League and there will also be a couple of spots made available on the team for some local Carnarvon senior players.

All proceeds from the match will go towards people affected by the recent Carnarvon floods and the 2011 Gasgoyne Flood Relief Appeal.

Kick-off will be at 6.00 pm and the main match will be preceded by a curtain raiser involving local teams.

Sydney FC To Play Two ACL Preparation Games

Sydney FC will play two friendly matches against New South Wales Premier League opponents in the lead up to and during its 2011 AFC Champions League campaign.

Sydney FC will play Sydney United on Wednesday 23 February at Edensor Park (7:30pm kick-off) in the lead up to their first match of the AFC Champions League campaign which is on Wednesday 2 March against Korea's Suwon Samsung Bluewings at the Sydney Football Stadium.

The Sky Blues will then play APIA Leichardt at Lambert Park on Wednesday 9 March (7:30pm kick-off) – a week before their second AFC Champions League match which is against Japan's Kashima Antlers at the Kashima Soccer Stadium in Kashima.

Petratos Sidelined For Six Weeks

Sydney FC have suffered a major injury blow on the eve of their 2011 AFC Champions League campaign with rising star Dimitri Petratos ruled out for six weeks with ankle ligament damage.

Tando Velaphi joins Victory

Melbourne Victory Football Club is pleased to announce it has secured the services of Perth Glory goalkeeper Tando Velaphi on a 2-year deal.

Jets Re-Sign Jesic

The Newcastle Jets have re-signed Marko Jesic for the next 2 seasons.

Coolen To Lead Reds Forward

Adelaide United FC's ownership consortium has instilled its confidence in Head Coach Rini Coolen as the man to lead the club into its next phase by re-signing the Dutchman until 2015.

Kisel Back In Sky Blue

Sydney FC are proud to announce that Hyundai A-League 2010 Championship winning attacking midfielder and fan favourite Karol Kisel will return to the club for the 2011/12 season.

Jurman To Join Roar

Brisbane Roar has secured the services of young defender Matthew Jurman for two seasons.

CC MARINERS

1

NEWCASTLE JETS

0

Match Details

Central Coast Mariners 1 (Perez 89')
Newcastle Jets 0

Central Coast Mariners: 20. Matthew Ryan (gk), 2. Daniel McBREEN (22. Mustafa AMINI 78'), 3. Joshua ROSE, 4. Pedj BOJIC, 6. Patrick ZWAANSWIJK, 7. John HUTCHINSON (16. Trent SAINSBURY 90+2'), 10. Patricio PEREZ, 11. Oliver BOZANIC, 14. Michael McGLINCHHEY, 18. Alex WILKINSON (c), 24. Bernie IBINI-ISEI (23. Adam KWASNIK 61').

Subs not used: 30. Paul HENDERSON (gk).
Yellow Cards: Hutchinson 61'
Red Cards: None

Newcastle Jets: 1. Ben KENNEDY (gk), 2. Taylor REGAN, 3. Adam D'APUZZO, 4. Nikolai TOPER STANLEY (c), 11. Tarek ELRICH, 12. Jobe WHEELHOUSE, 14. Labiot HALITI (13. Sasho PETROVSKI 70'), 16. Jeremy BROCKIE (18. Marko JESIC 61'), 19. Ali ABBAS (31. Jacob PEPPER 81'), 23. Ryan GRIFFITHS, 28. Mario SIMIC.

Subs not used: 40. Matthew NASH (gk).

Yellow Cards: D'Apuzzo 25', Simic 71', Pepper 90+2'
Red Cards: None

Referee: Chris BEATH
Crowd: 9,975 at Bluetongue Stadium, Gosford.

SHORT PASSES

Lions make three key player signings
After narrowly avoiding being relegated to State League two, Preston Lions are leaving no stone unturned in a bid to return the club back to the glory days.

The club recently confirmed that it has made three key player signings ahead of the 2011 Victorian State League Division 1 season.

Current club captain Tony Sterjovski has committed for another season in the red and yellow and his attacking prowess down the left side of midfield will continue to be a major weapon for the Lions.

Former Preston captain and dual championship player John Sapazovski will return to the club following stints at Sunshine Georgies and Bentleigh Greens in the Victorian Premier League. Sapazovski's experience, senior leadership qualities and nous around goal will add an extra dimension to the Lions strike force.

Meanwhile seasoned defender Zelko Popovic will resume his position in the Preston Lions back half.

Mariners end on a high

By Adrian Deans

DERBIES between the Mariners and the Jets are always keenly felt and hard fought (by the players and the fans), but unfortunately most of the juice was sucked out of this game before a ball was kicked.

The reason for that was that Wellington had failed to do the right thing by the Jets and lose, thus robbing the Jets of a chance to win, and thereby make the finals.

The resultant flatness of the Jets was on display in the first minute which was reminiscent of Mexico v Portugal on the Simpsons – Topor-Stanley holds it. Holds it. Hooooolds it...

It was at least a minute before the Mariners touched the ball and, during the same period, the Jets never left their half.

When the game did get underway (in a genuinely competitive sense) it was the Mariners who took control, and it was the usual suspects pulling the strings.

Chief Suspect number one was Patrick Zwaanswijk. When people talk about the best players or best imports in the league this year, they usually refer to Flores, Broich, Van Dijk, Hernandez, Fowler et al, but for me, the Mariners are in their lofty position due more to the efforts of Zwaanswijk than any other player – which makes him arguably one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, player in the league.

Zwaanswijk was at it again, nipping in at second defender and playing numerous long balls perfectly into the path of (mostly) Bojic or McGlinchey, while Rose and Bozanic were continuing their double act down the left which has produced so many chances this season.

Today, most of the chances fell to Patricio Perez, who played a fantastic first half despite failing to find the net with several guilt-edged opportunities. His first chance came after being set up by Daniel McBreen just eight yards out. To be fair, Ben Kennedy stood up well and forced the save, but a player who has graced the same pitch as Lionel Messi for Argentina's Under 20s should have done better. He wasted further chances – a wayward header from brilliant cross from Rose, then a cut back from Rose in first half injury time which he would have side-footed home 99 times out of a hundred.

The other talking point in the first half, for Mariners fans at least, was the number of times Ibini was man-handled to the ground in the box by first Topor-Stanley and then Taylor Regan. Referee Chris Beath wasn't interested but he might think again when he watches the replays.

The second half was a somewhat different story. The Jets came out and decided to play – especially Topor-Stanley – who had an absolute blinder. His clearance off the line (running toward his goal) near the end of the match was stunning



Ben Kennedy prepares to save from Patricio Perez. Photos: KAREN DOUGLAS



Jets' TaylorRegan pulls down Bernie Ibini in the box. Photos: KAREN DOUGLAS

but was trumped in the 64th minute by a triple save from Zwaanswijk, followed up by a brilliant swan dive into the top corner by Matt Ryan to deny Jesic.

The defining action of the match came when Mustafa Amini was introduced late to combine (possibly for the first time all season) with Patricio Perez. So many good judges had said that they were too similar to play together but immediately they looked fabulous and showed tremendous understanding. And it was Amini who proved the difference when, in the 90th minute, he shielded the ball from four defenders while waiting for the

run of Josh Rose, then delivered a perfect left channel ball for Rose to square, inviting a Perez tap in.

It was a fair enough result – and indeed the Mariners should have had it wrapped up by half time. Their profligacy in front of goal was in stark contrast with the masterful performance of the Brisbane Roar on Saturday night. The impending semi-finals between the Roar and the Mariners promise some pretty special football between two teams who have been head and shoulders above the pack this season, but if there's one area in which the Roar have an advantage, it's finishing.

The Mariners tend to need about ten good opportunities for every goal, whereas Brisbane get much better value for their chances.

Over the next few weeks, that may well prove the difference.

3 points – Patrick Zwaanswijk
2 points – Nikolai Topor-Stanley
1 point – Josh Rose

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores

Phoenix End in Flurry over Fury

WELLINGTON PHOENIX

3

NORTH QLD FURY

1

THE Wellington Phoenix sealed a playoff spot with a 3-1 win over North Queensland Fury and goalkeeper Danny Vukovic realised a long-held ambition.

With the Phoenix leading 2-1 in the final minute Fury defender Brett Studman pulled back Wellington substitute Mirjan Pavlovic in the penalty area and Vukovic raced the length of the field to grab the ball and score from the spot.

Vukovic loves playing a striker's role before training and can often be seen slotting penalties before the serious work begins.

That paid dividends tonight as he gave goalkeeper Sebastian Usai no chance with a sweetly struck spot kick.

"I ran over to Ricki [Herbert] and asked could I take it," a laughing Vukovic said.

"I'm not sure what he said but didn't really care. I knew it was the last kick of the game and there is no better time for a keeper to score than then.

"Troy [Hearfield] had the ball and he is my best mate in the team. He knew how I have always wanted to score in a competitive match so he handed the ball over to me."

The fans loved it and it ended a successful night on a high note.

Needing only a point from the game to secure sixth place in the playoffs, the Phoenix got off to a great start by scoring twice in the opening 11 minutes through Chris Greenacre and Dylan Macallister.

Greenacre opened the scoring in the 7th minute when he beat Fury's offside trap and raced away to slip the ball past Usai.

Macallister was also left free by the square Fury defence and the big striker kept his composure to score with a delicate chip.

From that point the Phoenix were in control, apart from a short period in the second spell during which Studman scored with a header from the corner.

Wellington changed their shape to regain control and could have scored at least four more goals before Vukovic netted his penalty.

Coach Ricki Herbert was happy with his team's performance, especially given the tough schedule his team have endured in the last few weeks.

The return from suspension of Ben Sigmund and Manny Muscat added stability to Wellington's defence and midfield.

The Phoenix will now face third-placed Adelaide United in Adelaide on Friday night and Herbert suggested there was a chance Paul Ifill could travel with the team.

Captain Andrew Durante missed Wednesday's game against Sydney FC and last night's match through suspension, but will be available for the playoffs and will be competing with Sigmund and Jade North for the two centre back spots.

A 12,718 strong crowd turned out for the Phoenix's final home game and stayed long after the final whistle to salute the team.

Wellington Phoenix 3 (Chris Greenacre, Dylan Macallister, Danny Vukovic), North Queensland Fury 1 (Brett Studman). HT: 2-0

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ADELAIDE UNITED



2

MELBOURNE VICTORY



1

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 2

(Reid 6', Dodd 78')

Melbourne Victory 1

(Thompson 65')

Referee: Ryan Shephard

Crowd: 21,083 @ Adelaide Oval

Adelaide United: 1.Eugene GALEK-OVIC (gk), 3.Nigel BOOGAARD, 8.Adam HUGHES, 10.Marcos FLORES, 11.Andy SLORY (17. Iain RAMSAY 37'), 12.Paul REID, 13.Travis DODD (c), 14.Cameron WATSON, 16.Dario BODRUSIC (2.Robert CORNTHWAITE 69'), 19.Mathew LECKIE (7.Lucas PANTELIS 83'), 21.Francisco USUCAR

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark BIRIGHITTI (gk)

Yellow cards: Bodrusic 61', Boogaard65', Flores 87'
Red cards: Nil

Melbourne Victory: 1.Michael PETK-OVIC (gk), 3.Mate DUGANDZIC (16. Carlos HERNANDEZ 58'), 4.Petar FRANJIC, 7.Matthew KEMP (5.Surat SUKHA 76'), 11.Marvin ANGULO, 12.Rodrigo VARGAS, 13.Diogo FERREIRA, 15.Tom PONDELJAK (10. Archie THOMPSON 58'), 18.Danny ALLSOPP, 21.Robbie KRUSE, 23.Adrian LEIJER (c)

Substitutes not used: 20.Sebastian MATTEI (gk)

Yellow cards: Kruse 69'
Red cards: Nil



Archie Thompson wasted no time in returning to action and scored shortly after coming on as sub.Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Victory sees Reds grab third

By Nat Adamopoulos

ADELAIDE United has finished its 2010-2011 Hyundai A-League Season on a high cementing third spot on the table with a strong 2-1 win over arch rivals Melbourne Victory at Adelaide Oval in front of a crowd of 21083, their captain Travis Dodd scoring the winner in the 78th minute.

In what could be described as a highly entertaining match, the Reds not only took away the three points but managed to notch up consecutive victories over their nemesis, albeit without star striker Sergio Van Dijk and pocket rocket Cassio. Despite all the tension and anticipation that is present when the two sides duel and given the recent slump Adelaide had succumbed to with a grueling three games played in seven days, the Reds started the match with a rejuvenated hunger taking control of the match early.

In fact it took only six minutes for the Reds to score through a goal by midfielder Paul Reid that send the homeside fans into a spin and had Victory keeper Michael Petkovic reeling at his defence for conceding such a soft goal. Three minutes later it was almost déjà vu when Reid produced an identical shot, this time Petkovic covering it confidently.

Reds new Dutch import Andwele Slory (a replacement for outgoing Matthew Leckie) made his mark early in the match with his Dutch flair, speed and excitement providing some great leads and challenges up front to give the Victory defenders a headache.

The winger was denied what looked like a possible penalty in the 10th minute after being brought down by keeper Petkovic in a heavy clash that referee Ryan Shephard waved play on, the blow keeping both players on the deck for a short time.

After both players recovered it seemed it was going to be the Slory show as he twisted, turned and snaked his way through the Melbourne defence time and time again. Adelaide were defiant with another chance missed by Marcos Flores in the 15th minute via a cleverly crossed ball from Matthew Leckie.

It wasn't all Adelaide though as the visitors found their feet after a slow first twenty minutes starting with a Tom Pondeljak free kick from just outside the box and moments later a lovely shot from Marvin Angulo that tested Reds keeper Eugene Galekovic.

Looking ominous and gathering momentum, Melbourne's attack continued when Robbie Kruse showed his talents with some clever footwork providing an opportunity for Mate Dugandzic to score, only to put it wide of the goals.

The promise shown from the hot shot Slory was put to bed in the



Adelaide United's Adam Hughes can't contain his delight as Paul Reid's free kick eludes Victory keeper Michael Petkovic for the opener. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Knock out! Travis Dodd ensures third spot stays in Adelaide after his header settled the highly charged affair. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

37th minute of the match as he succumbed to a calf injury sustained in the earlier clash with Victory keeper Petkovic and was replaced by youngster Iain Ramsay.

The opening minutes of the second half saw Adelaide dominate again, their determination to take this match evident as they continued to push forward.

It seemed that enough was enough for Victory coach Ernie Merrick by the 57th minute, upping the anti by bringing on his big guns Carlos Hernandez and Archie Thompson for Dugandzic and Pondeljak.

To see four greats such as Allsopp, Kruse, Thompson and Hernandez in an attacking force would bring nightmares to any side and that it did for Adelaide as the double barreled substitution proved fruitful. Thompson playing his first match after a seven game absence stamped his mark on the match immediately.

His razor sharp finish in the 65th minute from as Allsopp pass comprehensively beat Galekovic finding the top right corner of the net silencing the sea of red behind goals that the four Victorian forwards acknowledged duly.

In a moment where Adelaide could've slumped further and let their opposition take the game from them, they steadied the ship and again provided some entertaining play for the big crowd.

With a continual attack on Victory's defence and keeper they eventually broke through with a second goal and subsequent winner from a great Ramsay free kick that was spot on for Dodd to head over Petkovic and into the back of the net, the goal somewhat redeeming for Dodd from what was an 'ordinary' performance for the match.

The duel continued with some very heated moments in the 87th minute as Flores and Diogo Fer-

reira clashed and exchanged pleasantries, Flores earning himself a yellow card in the foray.

In some gut wrenching moments for the crowd the visitors again had their chances, Hernandez almost making himself a hero when he shot for goal from 30metres out, the shot deflecting off Reds defender Nigel Boogaard and into the post.

Then into injury time menacing Thompson was brought down by Reid earning his side a free kick but unable to see a fairy tale ending as he put his shot well over the keepers head.

As the final whistle blew the strong crowd was euphoric; a second consecutive win over their rivals sweet.

Sweeter still for hometown fans, they see their side secure third spot on the table and a home game to start their finals campaign.

SHORT PASSES

Jets Re-Sign Nikolai Topor-Stanley

The Newcastle Jets are pleased to announce the re-signing of Nikolai Topor-Stanley for the next two seasons.

Topor-Stanley has been a central figure for the Jets defence this season and his signing comes at a time as the Newcastle Jets enter an exciting chapter in their history.

"I am really pleased to know that I am in Newcastle for the next two seasons. The club is certainly heading in the right direction and I am happy knowing that I am going to be a part of it." Topor-Stanley said.

Mr Ray Baartz, Chairman of the Jets Football Advisory Board, said the club was pleased to have re-signed Topor-Stanley who was emerging as a strong leader of the club.

"Nikolai has been a rock of our defence this season and he has come a long way in such a short amount of time,"

"Nikolai will form the basis of our leadership group over the next two years and is a great role model for our young players that we have coming through" Baartz said.

Nikolai Topor-Stanley has been named on the shortlist for the FFA Team of the 2010/2011 season and is pushing for a recall to the Soceroos squad.

Sibon Farewells Heart

Dutch import Gerald Sibon joined John Aloisi and Josip Skoko in farewell Melbourne Heart FC during the Club's Hyundai A-League match against Sydney FC on Saturday night.

Sibon, who turns 37 in April, was a significant contributor to Heart's debut season, making 25 appearances, scoring seven goals and producing five assists, all the while entertaining fans with his unique mix of trickery, touch and power.

Head Coach John van 't Schip said Sibon's presence has been of enormous benefit to the club. "We were very happy with Gerald's input and the important role he played in our first year as a start-up Club. His experience was invaluable in mentoring the younger players," he said.

"Gerald's vision, touch and ability to draw others into the game were fantastic and the Club has been pleased with his contribution. Throughout his time at Heart, he showed just why he was able to have such a successful career in Europe."

Chief Executive Officer Scott Munn said the experience and professionalism of Sibon, Heart's inaugural marquee player, was crucial in establishing a culture at the Club.

"Whilst everyone was able to see Gerald weave his magic on game day, his excellent contribution behind the scenes to the fostering and development of the emerging young members of our side is worthy of recognition," he said.

"We would like to thank Gerald for his efforts and wish him all the best in his future endeavours."

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De Vanna delight in grand final win

SYDNEY FC



1

BRISBANE ROAR



2

Sydney FC 1
(Kylie LEDBROOK 34')
Brisbane Roar 2
(Tameka BUTT 10', Lisa DE VANNA 66')

Saturday, 11 February 2011
Campbelltown Stadium, Campbelltown
Referee: Kate Jacewicz
Assistant referees: Sarah Ho Allyson Flynn
Fourth official: Kirralee Gardiner

Sydney FC: 1.Dimi POULOS (gk), 2. Teresa POLIAS, 3. Danielle BROGAN, 6. Servet UZUNLAR, 8. Renee ROLLASON (13. Catherine CANNULI 76'), 9. Caitlin FOORD, 10. Kylie LEDBROOK (c) (16. Linda O'NEILL 90'), 11. Lydia VANDENBERGH 15. Teigen ALLEN (14. Nicola BOLGER 68'), 17. Kyah SIMON, 19. Leena KHAMIS

Substitutes not used: 5. Alanna KENNEDY, 20 Erin HERD (gk)
Yellow cards: Kylie LEDBROOK 36', Leena KHAMIS 74'
Red cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar: 1. Casey DUMONT (gk), 4. Clare POLKINGHORNE (C), 5. Brooke SPENCE, 6. Joanne BURGESS (3. Karla REUTER 84'), 7. Kim CARROLL, 8. Elise KELLOND-KNIGHT, 10. Lana HARCH (19. Lisa DE VANNA 42'), 11. Aivi LUIK, 13. Tameka BUTT, 14. Amy CHAPMAN (18. Kennya CORDNER 67'), 16. Lauren COLTHORPE

Substitutes not used: 2. Laura ALLEWAY, 20. Kate STEWART (gk)
Yellow cards: Lisa DE VANNA 67', Clare POLKINGHORNE 71'
Red cards: Nil

By Daniel Lato

BRISBANE Roar have found their fairytale ending, winning the Westfield W-League grand final in a 2-1 victory over reigning Premiers Sydney FC in a tight clash at Campbelltown Stadium on Saturday.

The win solidifies their position as one of the league's powerhouses, having won their second grand final in the three years that the competition has been running.

Super substitute Lisa De Vanna broke the 1-all deadlock in the 65th minute, with the team able to hold down the attacking Sydney forward line lead by Kyah Simon until the final siren.

Brisbane Roar didn't hesitate to make a run early in the first half with Lana Harch dominating the left wing.

Her first attempt rebounded off Sydney's Servet Uzunlar only to land back at Harch's feet, with a second shot drifting over the crossbar.

Tameka Butt was next to challenge Sydney's defensive stocks, with a cross to Harch who was unable to direct her head towards goal, instead veering to the left.

Sydney FC where quick to reply with Simon taking an initial charge towards goal in the seventh minute but was also unable to convert.

Simon's teammates followed her lead with a Leena Khamis cross finding Renee Rollason but again they were unable to make a mark on the scoreboard.

The Roar produced results early, drawing first blood in the tenth minute with the Harch - Butt duo drawing momentum from their

initial run towards the goal.

Harch laid out a cross to Butt who was under pressure by two Sydney FC defenders but managed to get a head to the ball first which slide past the goalie to open up the scoring.

Finding space along the left wing, Simon again looked dangerous towards goal in the 11th minute only to be saved by Roar goalkeeper Casey Dumont.

A poor clearance from Dumont saw the ball find Sydney's Kylie Ledbrook who took a shot from far range which again travelled to the left of the goal post.

Harch continued to challenge the Sydney defence dominating the left wing in the 23rd minute only to be contested by the goalkeeper Dimi Poulos with the shot going wide to the left.

Teigen Allen orchestrated another run towards goals for Sydney passing to Simon who made a run down the left wing finding enough space to setup a clear shot towards goals in the 33rd minute, forcing Dumont to act quickly to punch the ball away.

Ledbrook found the equalizer in the 34th minute taking a shot from a distance which rebounded off the far post and into the net.

The Butt - Harch duo that was looking dangerous around goals was disrupted in the 38th minute when a cross from Kellond Knight found Harch shadowed by two Sydney defenders.

While Harch's shot drifted left she clipped her right ankle and went down needing to be stretched off the field with a feared dislocated or fractured ankle.

De Vanna got the earlier than anticipated call up to replace Harch in the 42nd minute to finish out the first half.

A Joanne Burgess pass towards goal was deflected by Sydney's Danielle Brogan only to find Amy Chapman who's shot was wide in the second minute of injury time.

Sydney opened the second half with Simon taking another shot on goal, with Dumont able to get her fingertips to the ball to tip it over the crossbar in the 48th minute.

De Vanna looked dangerous running towards goal in the 54th minute only for Caitlin Foord to intercept and clear the ball before De Vanna could line up for the shot.

Khamis was handed a yellow card in the 55th minute due to a collision between her and two Roar players including goalie Dumont.

De Vanna took another stab in the 59th minute only to be saved by Poulos.

Simon was not to be beaten taking another run up the left wing in the 59th minute to pass to Ledbrook, keeping Dumont accountable with another save.

An opportunity for the Roar to get in front presented itself in the 65th minute with De Vanna able to beat Brogan in the final third to convert the winning goal.

The Roar built on the momentum trying to find a third goal to seal the win, with international recruit Kennya Cordner passing to Butt who found De Vanna in front of the goal.

De Vanna, being tricky, attempted to shoot the goal over her left shoulder but the shot went wide to the left of the post in the 73rd minute.

Cordner found herself just outside of the goals in the 77th minute, with a shot that looked certain to secure the win for the Roar, only

for it to go marginally wide.

De Vanna takes another charge towards goal with Cordner setting herself up in the box, De Vanna passes it bak to Burgess who chips it over towards Cordner who is looming outside of the goal, but Poulos intercepts and clears the ball out.

Sydney FC was starting to look desperate to even up the scores but they could not put a stop to the momentum of the Brisbane Roar going forward.

A corner shot in the 92nd minute for Sydney looked to be one of the last chances to produce the equaliser but Lydia Vandenberg's shot went wide resulting in a second corner.

The kick was deflected from the congested area in front of goals to find Nicola Bolger who was unable to convert.

Sydney were awarded a third corner with 30 seconds left on the clock in a last effort attempt to win back the game. Catherine Cannuli found Foord who passed to Uzunlar with a long shot going wide of the goal, confirming the win for the Roar. Roar captain Clare Polkinghorne was elated with the win and the team effort by the team.

"I am so proud of my girls, they pulled through and we deserved this one hundred percent," Polkinghorne said

"We came out here and showed what football we can play and full credit to the girls.

"I couldn't even single one player out from our team, it was such a team effort all over the park, everyone did their job.

"Coming into three grand finals in a row it is nice to come out with two from three."

FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Sydney FC	10	8	0	2	29	9	20	24
2 Brisbane Roar	10	6	3	1	17	7	10	21
3 Canberra United	10	5	2	3	16	9	7	17
4 Melbourne Victory	10	4	3	3	12	11	1	15
5 Perth Glory	10	4	1	5	11	15	-4	13
6 Newcastle Jets	10	3	1	6	13	15	-2	10
7 Adelaide United	10	0	0	10	4	36	-32	0

THE FINAL SERIES

First Semi Final
Saturday, 5 February
Brisbane Roar2
(Tameka BUTT 23', Kennya CORDNER 96')
Canberra United 2
(Caitlin MUNOZ 57', Michelle HEYMAN 97')
Brisbane wins 4-2 on penalties

First Semi Final
Sunday, 6 February
Sydney FC 5
(Leena KHAMIS 26/75', Servet UZUNLAR 38' (pen), Kyah SIMON 74', Nicola BOLGER 88')
Melbourne Victory 1
(Stephanie CATLEY 30')

Leading Goal Scorers

- 11 - Kyah SIMON
- 7 - Tara ANDREWS
- 6 - Michelle HEYMAN, Leena KHAMIS
- 5 - Tameka BUTT
- 4 - Lana HARCH, Jodie TAYLOR
- 3 - Lisa DE VANNA, Caitlin FRIEND, Kate GILL, Sam KERR, Kylie LEDBROOK, Caitlin MUNOZ
- 2 - Catherine CANNULI, Stephanie CATLEY, Melissa FEUERRIEGEL, Heather GARRIOCK, Sasha McDONNELL

- 1 - Ellie BRUSH, Joanne BURGESS, Kim CARROLL, Lauren COLTHORPE, Caitlin COOPER, Hayley CRAWFORD, Elisa D'OVIDIO, Kendall FLETCHER, Caitlin FOORD, Jaymee GIBBONS, Emily GIELENIK, Katrina GORRY, Ashleigh GUNNING, Amy JACKSON, Elise KELLOND-KNIGHT, Monnique KOFOED, Selin KURALAY, Cian MACIEJEWSKI, Shannon MAY, Collette McCALLUM, Eilysy PERRY, Renee ROLLASON, Maika RUYTER-HOOLEY, Ashleigh SYKES, Servet UZUNLAR, Emily VAN EGMOND



Brisbane Roar made it two out of three grand finals after coming back from behind to beat Sydney FC 2-1 on Saturday. Now it's the men's turn...Photos: PAUL LAU

Taking It Like A Fan

By Adrian Deans

“Build it...and they will come.”

IT worked for the disembodied voices among the cornstalks in Field of Dreams, so why not for the A-League?

The A-League has been built, and “they” have come – some of them. But no-one would dare to suggest that the A-League is anywhere near the success story that we true believers would like it to be. For all its potential, football is still a second tier professional sport in Australia, and until it can stand shoulder to shoulder with the AFL, the NRL and cricket, the football powers-that-be have their work cut out.

When you think about it, the fact that football is not the dominant professional sport in Australia is a bit of a mystery. Participation rates dwarf the other codes, so the interest in the game is certainly there. The Socceroos, as a brand, are definitely top tier, so why doesn’t that interest translate to the A-League? If you’ve already got mass interest in the game and a hugely popular national team, marketing the A-League ought to be a bit of a no-brainer, shouldn’t it?

The FFA’s most recent marketing thrust has been: Fan Made – seeking to get the fans to identify with non-corporate, non-centrist imagery and feel good about themselves as A-League football fans.

The Fan Made idea was the football equivalent of the Happy Meal. It was a lazy, superficial appeal to neo-tribalism dreamed up by some latte-sipping suit with a Masters in Semiotics who wouldn’t know his Arsenal from his elbow. And it didn’t work because someone forgot to tell Poindexter that tribal culture grows organically from within – it can’t be imposed from the outside.

If you doubt me, watch the behaviour of the Melbourne Heart fans when the “Official Heart Song” is played.

The fact is:

- Australian fans don’t like being told how they should look or behave; and
- by identifying the look and behaviour of existing fans, the advertising excluded potential fans.

But what this reveals is an even more fundamental problem. The FFA doesn’t need to sell the game to the fans. The game is not a “product” for the FFA to sell. The game is a natural resource (endlessly renewable) which the FFA has the honour of presiding over, for the moment. They are like a board of directors whose job it is to foster and grow the game for the benefit of the shareholders – and by far the biggest and most important group of shareholders is the fans.

The best thing the FFA can do for the game in this country is to give us fans what we want – not tell us what they think we want and thrust it down our throats in commodified chunks.



A-League fans utilise the terraces to vent their frustration and spread the message at the Adelaide Utd versus Victory game. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

The irony is, of course, that if the FFA did give us what we wanted, they’d sell a lot more tickets and merchandise, drive a harder bargain with TV rights and stride with greater confidence through the corporate corridors of power. The fans are the true custodians of the game and the FFA needs to empower and unleash them in order to truly grow into our best image of ourselves.

So what do the fans want from the FFA? Everyone will have their own ideas, so here are mine:

- We want the FFA to genuinely connect with all levels of football rather than just the A-League. (FFA Cup soon please – must be knockout style.)
- We want the FFA to make it easy to support our teams and attend matches (this must include an attractive pricing structure).
- We want to be partners with our clubs – able to express ourselves as fans without being segregated and patronised.
- We want the technical development of the game to be well managed at all levels (from Under 5s up to the Socceroos). (I’d give them a tick on this.)
- And we want the FFA to be proud of its mission and the fans they represent.

Too often it seems that (with the exception of Frank Lowy) the FFA are self-conscious and diffident with regard to the other codes. Well, bugger the other codes! Football doesn’t need to step aside and lower its gaze when the other codes lumber past. Football should know it owns the future and stride confidently forward, not giving a rodent’s glutes for what the others get up to.

Which brings us back to marketing. The FFA were actually on the right track in trying to connect with fan tribalism – they just got it wrong. Instead of telling the fans how to look or behave, they should be getting the fans, in the

first place, simply to realise that they ARE part of the tribe.

In order to do that we need to be emphasising what makes football different from the other codes – and the starkest difference is goals.

Goals are hard to get.

Unlike Aussie Rules or basketball, where games are won by sheer volume of goals (most of them immediately forgettable), goals in football are very difficult to score. That’s what makes them so spectacular, important and memorable.

Football is often criticised, by those who don’t understand the game, as being “boring, because there are so few goals”. Those who do understand the game know that it is the threat of a goal or the prospect of a goal which makes the game so stressful (and therefore entertaining) for the supporters. One goal can mean life or death.

You look at the goal before a game and think: Jeez...why’s it so hard to score? Eight feet by twenty feet of goal, only 45 – 50 metres away from your half. It shouldn’t be that hard, but it is. And there you have the simplicity, complexity and beauty of the game in a nutshell.

The entire strategy of football is about creating enough time and space in the enemy’s third to make scoring possible. Your defensive shape; your transitional shape; the way you work the ball into areas that suit you and don’t suit the enemy; the way you optimise the respective talents of personnel; final third patterns of movement – it’s all about creating a split second window for Champagne Charlie to have a crack at the back of the net and enable the entire team, and the fans, to share that ecstatic moment of triumph.

That’s why we go to the game. We enlightened ones understand that the 90 minute struggle is about the fight for goals rather than just the goals. Eric Cantona says that his sweetest moment on

the football pitch was a pass! We of the rusted on football tribe get that but there are plenty more who also get it but aren’t coming to A-League games.

So who’s not coming? What members of the tribe are not joining in to our regular rituals?

There are approximately 800,000 registered footballers in Australia. Throw in coaches, managers, referees and other officials, the number climbs to over one million. Then throw in families and friends of registered players, you can at least triple that. Add also the ex-players and fans with no connection to a registered player and we are probably talking a core potential A-League audience of four to five million. That’s core – I’m not talking about trying to win market share from other codes. (Of course, most people follow more than one code, so you don’t have convert them away from their usual code – you just have to get them to enjoy football as well as their usual code.)

The job of the FFA marketers is to reach out to the core potential five million and get them to engage with the League. The classic example of the sort of person we’re talking about here probably plays (or played) football and passionately follows a team from overseas, but if they attend a sports event it’s more likely to be AFL or rugby league or State-League soccer (where they already have a tribal connection). Let’s call this potential fan: Nick. If Nick ever mentions the A-League, he/she will compare it with the best overseas leagues, which he/she can watch every week on telly, and dismiss the A-League as second rate.

Fair enough. It is second rate compared to the EPL, Primera Liga, Serie A, the Bundesliga, the J-League, MSL and numerous others. But Australians expect the best. We have the best rugby league competition, the only Aussie Rules competition, our state and national rugby teams play in the best rugby competitions (Super

15 and Tri-nations) and we are used to supporting the best cricket team (not so much recently, but you know what I mean). Everyone knows that the A-League is not the best football competition in the world. For those who already support, that is entirely irrelevant. For the millions of other Australians who are involved in or otherwise interested in football, it is the critical factor.

So how do we connect with the Nicks – the core potential five million – who know that the A-League is second rate? (And don’t want to be associated with anything less than first rate.)

Well for a start, we have to address the systemic issues referred to above regarding the FFA and its stewardship of the game. Nick needs to see that the existing active fans are genuinely engaged and excited about the league. When people see other people truly engaged and enjoying something, they want in.

But there needs to be more – a message that reaches out to Nick and reminds him that he’s part of the tribe. The marketing message has to be visceral – something Nick can feel in his/her guts. We need the Nicks to reconnect with the local game by appealing to their own sensory experience of football.

“How does it feel?” should be the FFA message to both the converted and the unconverted.

Nick knows how it feels. He’s played the game so he’s part of the tribe – but if we are to draw Nick back into the main event, we have to remind Nick what he loved about the game and how that connects him with the A-League now.

The common link is the experience of the game. Anyone who’s played understands the science of making time and space...knows the smell of liniment, rain and fresh cut grass...remembers the crunch of a clean tackle...the team strut when you go two up with five to go and sense the enemy’s surrender...that first slug of beer after a hard fought win...and above

all, the elation of making that net bulge. This is the essence of football, and is felt by all players, irrespective of the level at which they play. Nick knows this, and if we can get him/her to associate the essence of football with his/her local A-League club, we will make great inroads into the potential core.

The FFA could do worse than to interview a bunch of Joes Public (adults and kids) and ask: what was your greatest football experience? The experiences could be described – with great piquancy and nicely edited – and then the raconteur could be asked: “And who do you support?” (Cue spectacular A-League goal and crowd scenes etc). Nick would understand this.

Of course, the FFA also need to review their own relationship with the fans and the game. And to be fair, there are plenty of things they’ve done well – especially as far as Asia and the technical development of the game is concerned – which is why in its 6th season the standard of football in the A-League has improved out of sight. It’s hard for us to compare with the leagues that we don’t see much on telly, but those of us with Foxtel see a fair bit of the English Championship, and I have no doubt that if Brisbane Roar were playing in that competition, that they would not be relegated. Neither would the top three or four teams in the A-League (probably).

So, build it and they will come?

Sure, but don’t tell them how to come. All we have to do is make it easy for them to come, let the fans enjoy themselves in their own ways, and remind the Nicks of how their own experience of the Beautiful Game is shared by the players at their local A-League club.

Simple.

Over to you Ben.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores.

Melbourne Fan Forum

The Melbourne version of the Sydney event which featured Craig Foster, Mark Bosnich and Sydney FC’s Edwin Lugt and was set up at football fans frustration of being left out and not engaged by football administrators and A-League clubs takes place on Wednesday 16th February at the Melbourne Town Hall with a 7:30pm for 8pm start.

All are invited to attend this superb event, supporters, players, club reps, if you love football and want to discuss all things football in Australia then this is an event not to be missed.

The Panel will include Lyall Gorman (Head of Hyundai A-League), Richard Wilson (Managing Director of Melbourne Victory), Scott Munn (CEO Melbourne Heart), Trent Jacobs (Gen Mgr Operations Melb Victory), Brendan Schwab (CEO PFA), Michael Zappone (Fox Sports), Mark Van Aken (President GGA), Michael Lynch (The Age) with Francis Leach (SEN) as Facilitator.

The objectives are to create an environment with a panel of professionals representing a wide area of the game who openly discuss the current state of the game in Australia at all levels.

The panel will then take questions from the floor and look at solutions and options to drive the game in Australia.

THE highly-coveted Copa Libertadores this year is looking very much sought-after. Summer has provided an off-season with a number of opportunities for qualified teams across the continent to re-shuffle rosters and transfers have been busy, shaping up and strengthening basically every squad during the break.

As usual, coaches have departed and new names have arrived however, expectations particularly for the big traditional clubs remain high despite a lack of convincing from fans and performances last season in 2010.

Long gone are the days of giants Flamengo for example, Vasco da Gama, Boca Juniors or River Plate in the tournament with

plenty of surprise teams qualifying deservedly after solid campaigns. This is a chance for these small-fancied clubs to showcase their youth talent at disposal at the highest of club competitions.

Season 2011 has commenced practically in every domestic competition and with the Copa America scheduled for mid-year, this year's Libertadores will conclude in time for the international tournament.

Conmebol, the continental governing-body organisation has remained unchanged with the number of qualifying clubs in each respective country heading into the final 32-team competition.

Internacional, Brazil's star-studded defending champion have retained its international players

and are perceived by the Brazilian media as a 'distinct club' as they have prioritised the Copa professionally instead of solely concentrating on the domestic league. They have automatically qualified for the second stage and are drawn in group six.

The opening night delivers an interesting clash between current Brazilian holders Fluminense at home in Rio to Argentinos Juniors. The remaining other tie in the drawn group 3 looks tough with Uruguayan giant Nacional and Club América of Mexico City, who qualified via the play-offs and competes as a guest invitee to the tournament.

The first qualification phase saw the following:

- Deportes Tolima of Colombia defeat highly-favoured Corinthians featuring Ronaldo and Roberto Carlos,
- Jaguares de Chiapas of Mexico defeat Peruvian giant Alianza Lima,
- Paraguayan giant Cerro Porteño eliminate exciting outfit Deportivo Petaré of Venezuela,
- Unión Española of Chile qualify defeating Bolívar of La Paz,
- Argentine giant Independiente of Avellaneda defeat Deportivo Quito of Ecuador and
- Gremio, the holding champions' arch-rival from Porto Alegre overcome Liverpool of Uruguay.

Group 1
Libertad (Paraguay)
Once Caldas (Colombia)
San Luis FC (Mexico)
Universidad San Martín (Peru)

Group 2
Gremio (Brazil)
Atlético Junior (Colombia)
León de Huánuco (Peru)
Oriente Petrolero (Bolivia)

Group 4
Caracas FC (Venezuela)
Universidad Católica (Chile)
Unión Española (Chile)
Vélez Sarsfield (Argentina)

Group 5
Cerro Porteño (Paraguay)
Colo-Colo (Chile)
Deportivo Táchira (Venezuela)

Santos (Brazil)

Group 6
Emelec (Ecuador)
Internacional (Brazil)
Jaguares (Mexico)
Jorge Wilsterman (Bolivia)

Group 7
Cruzeiro (Brazil)
Deportes Tolima (Colombia)
Estudiantes de La Plata (Argentina)
Guaraní (Paraguay)

Group 8
Godoy Cruz (Argentina)
Independiente (Argentina)
LDU Quito (Ecuador)
Peñarol (Uruguay)

Gas Bagging Dept.



BOO'S WORLD



With Mark Boric

ANOTHER season of Victorian football is about to begin and unfortunately for those who deserve to be ridiculed, this column is back to do the business.

No ridicule for the Socceros in the latest edition of the Asian Cup this time, a fine tournament ending with an unlucky loss in extra-time. No longer hampered by the likes of Pim Verbeek and Graham Arnold, Australia flourished under Holger Osieck. Well, flourished just about as well as you can do when you have David Carney in your side.

Sadly, Paul Hogan returning to the World Cup to FIFA after it was stolen by an animated kangaroo was not enough make their Executive Committee happy with us and the 2022 World Cup went to Qatar. It was a World Cup we, or rather Frank Lowy, deserved according to noted the football pundit Elle MacPherson. In a country as dry as Qatar, however, you will find that it takes more than \$45 million to wet everyone's beak.

Brisbane Roar have stormed to the Premier's Plate in the A-League, coach Ange Postecoglou winning back the prized respect of Australia's number one football analyst Craig Foster along the way. Their famed interview on SBS's The World Game is certainly viewed in a different light these days.

On the commentary front the Asian Cup was once again marred by the work of Andy Harper. On the games he did not do it was



Tch! Tch! What's that Skip? We should have left you back in the vaults instead of trying to spearhead a multi zillion dollar World Cup campaign?

good to hear legendary former Perth Glory coach Bernd Stange adding some insight.

Nathan Tinkler is apparently trying to lure Michael Owen to the Newcastle Jets using his horse racing interests as owner of the Patinack Farm operation to entice the noted keen punter. The biggest suprise is that given Tinkler seems to change the trainer in charge of his horses every few months that Branko Culina is still in charge as coach. Less suprising though, if Tinkler also wants to sign Jason Culina from Gold Coast United.

In the VPL Eddie Krncevic has risen from the ranks of Goal! Weekly columnist to coach of South Melbourne, ruffling a few feathers along the way. Not to be outdone, I've bought a knife sharpening kit and am waiting

for Michael Chatzitrifonos to slip up before taking over the reins at Richmond.

Oakleigh Cannons have splashed out the cash once again, they must be disappointed they can't just buy the championship on eBay. The NTC have changed their name to the VTC but remain as loved as a red-headed stepchild. And like Ol' Man River, Green Gully just keep rolling along.

Stan Webster and Frank McGrellis are back on air with Victorian Kicktalk. Log on to www.kicktalk.co.uk and click on the Australian Soccer link to find their podcasts. If you choose not to, you won't notice when I try and pass off their insight and knowledge of the game as my own in future columns.



THE KATSA

With George Katsamboukas

LADIES and Gentlemen, and Bald Headed Club Powerbrokers, welcome back for Season 2011, which will be filled with tears of Joy, trips to the Westgate, the occasional Happy End, and litigation from and against the House of Darebin.

Also a special welcome back to the Good Folk at the House of Darebin, who I am told that once this fine Paper is delivered to their Leafy St Kilda Rd Offices on a Monday Morning, go straight to what was once called Katsa's Korner, to see if anything has been written about them.

Rest assured Folk's, the Elvis Classic "You are always on my mind" has, and will apply this year.

To quote the classic tune from "Grease", Summer Loving happened so fast, that in a blink, we are now back for another year. And what a big summer it has been.

Controversy reigned supreme a few weeks back, where Kevin "I'll get it" Muscat layed the Mother of all tackles on young Hearts Player Zahra, which even had me cringing.

It's been a while since my 700th Game where these types of tackles were typical of what I saw week in week out, however the General Public did not take too kindly to this incident, with Kevin ducking for cover for a few days.

However, Ernie handled the backlash with about as much interest as a Nun at a Swingers Party, with his best quote being, "I Didn't see the tackle".

Thankfully for Zahra, he will be back for next year's Season, some-

thing tells me the same cannot be said for Muscat who more likely than not, hang the Adidas up and prepare himself for the Coaching Job at Victory, this time in an Official capacity.

Over to the local scene we go, where some Club Powerbrokers have lost the absolute plot in terms of the \$\$\$ that they are offering some of the Pop Stars doing the Rounds.

The numbers that have been banded around are beyond belief, with \$500-\$700 Flats being offered at State 3 Level!

Great Country Australia, to these Club Powerbrokers, when your Club is in Financial difficulties please do not cry poor, as you made your "Sleepapedic", then you can go lie in it.

One lazy Sunday Morning I was having a Coffee with an associate, where out of nowhere a Club Powerbroker appeared, saying that he was about to sign a Player, and he had his signing on fee to hand over to him.

Out popped a wad of 50's and 100's, its thickness resembled those seen on Scarface where Tony Montana, who was a Political Refugee of Cuba, was doing Business with Manolo and Co. By the way, this Club Powerbroker belonged to a Club that was about 3 Division below the VPL, do the Math, you will figure out which Division I am talking about.

However, so as to protect the guilty I won't mention the Club's name.

Over to the VPL we go, which kicks off this Friday Night, where one Club, who play under light's, has been urging the House of Dare-

bin to inspect their lights for months now, so as to ensure that they are suitable for night match's.

Unfortunately for whatever reason it has not happened, however their Games have been scheduled for Night's, without this inspection taking place, however, the house of Darebin has found a time slot in their busy schedule to arrange this inspection over the next few days.

Will be interesting to see what happens if they don't meet the criteria, with the Competition's Department being put under the pump to reschedule this teams Home Games to times when the Sun is out and no Lights are required.

Gives new meaning to the term "The Cart before the Horse" Over to Old Trafford we go, where Wayne Rooney is back in favour with the United faithful, after his Goal of the Year Overhead scissor kick against their Old foe, Manchester City. Seems that Rooney's fetish for Happy Ends for Cash with, Muttons dressed up as lamb, has haunted him, and affected his performances of late.

Sorry I will rephrase that, seems that Rooney getting busted for having Happy Ends with Muttons dresses as Lamb's has haunted him.

Sir Alex being the forgiving and understanding person that he is, showed faith in Rooney and offered him a new Contract, this move seems to have paid off and United seem to be charging towards another Championship.

Good to be back, until next week. This is Katsa, just as you have known him.

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Hellas Wins Hellenic Cup

By John Kyrou

SOUTH Melbourne won the Hellenic Cup for the third time in five seasons after defeating Heidelberg United 2-1 in extra time on Saturday evening.

Despite going a goal down early in the match, South rallied to send the match into extra time before a magnificent Marinos Gasparis goal won the match and the Cup for the Blues at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex.

Both sides fielded strong line-ups in a match that provided the clubs with a tough and physical match against fellow Premier League opposition prior to the commencement of the League season proper next weekend. South had won through to the final after beating Premier League opposition in the Bentleyigh Greens, whilst Heidelberg booked its spot in the final by defeating Provisional League 1 side Beaumaris.

Heidelberg started the match well as South took a long time to settle into the game. The majority of chances fell to the Bergers in the first half and they were rewarded for their efforts when Osagie Ederaro beat several South defenders, cut in from the left and slotted past Stefaan Sardelic to open the scoring. South stepped up a gear and almost equalised straight away when a beautiful move on the right culminated in a cross to the back post for Fernando De Moraes to sky his shot over the bar. Eventually South



South Melbourne are the Greek Football Gods of Victoria for 2011 after defeating arch rivals Heidelberg United 2-1 in the Hellenic Cup final on Saturday. Photos: CINDY NITSOS

did level however, when Kyle Joryeff dispossessed his opponent with a clean tackle and sent a low cross from the right to the back post for Jesse Krncevic to fire into the roof of the net.

The second half was mostly South, with the Bergers needing some excellent defending to keep the scores level. Craig Elvin was unbeatable at centre-half, whilst goalkeeper Griffin McMaster pulled off the save of the match at his near post to deny Gasparis

a tap-in. However it was not all one-way traffic, as South needed a clearance off the line by Rhodri Payne and a wonderful block by Sardelic to deny the Bergers the lead again. Whilst the Bergers were always dangerous going forward with Ederaro, it was always South that looked the more likely to score again. However both sides remained level as the referee blew for extra time.

South remained on top during extra time and Gasparis was

finally able to beat McMaster when he expertly chipped him from the edge of the box on the right hand side. Despite a few nervous moments, South managed to hold onto its 2-1 lead to win what is hoped to be the first lot of silverware in 2011. Most importantly, South showed they were able to compete reasonably well with tough Premier League opposition, as the Bergers were in the top five in 2010 and have also enjoyed great results against

South recently. In somewhat of a consolation to the Bergers, Ederaro was given Man of the Match for his efforts up front.

There were a few worrying signs for South, with Daniel Vasilevski and Krncevic both going off the field for treatment. Krncevic's injury looked quite minor but Vasilevski was unsure of the diagnosis of his injury, however it is expected that both should be fine for the beginning of the League season proper next

weekend.

Heidelberg begins its 2011 Premier League season away at 2010 Minor Premiers and runners-up Richmond Eagles. That match kicks off at 15:00 next Sunday afternoon. On the same day, South hosts reigning champions Green Gully at John Cain Memorial Park, with that game kicking off at 17:00.

Knights retain Croatian Cup

THE 2011 Victorian Croatian Cup was retained by the Melbourne Knights, defeating North Geelong 4-0.

Goals from Anthony Colosimo, Jacob Colosimo, Yusuf Yusuf and Daniel Dragicevic sealed the win in the friendly tournament played between Victoria's big 4 Croatian clubs, the Melbourne Knights, St. Albans Saints, North Geelong Warriors and Dandenong City.

Over 800 people came through the turnstiles throughout the day, many donating to the worthy cause of helping sister club Rocklea United after their clubrooms were flooded in Queensland.

The Melbourne Knights Juniors also had their registration day during the tournament which brought a large number of families to the club as well as their traditional sausage sizzle for all the juniors and their parents.

The great spirit in which the tournament was played was testament to all of the clubs competing as well as the fact that

all clubs present nominated volunteers to collect donations for Rocklea United.

The Knights looked good in patches and look to concentrate on their last hitout for the season against Chinese Super League outfit Hangzhou Greentown FC on Tuesday night at Knights Stadium at 7:30pm.

The Alanic Victorian Premier League season begins this coming Sunday against Dandenong Thunder at home, kicking off at 6pm. A reminder to all 2011 members who haven't picked up their member's packs, or those that haven't renewed from Season 2010, that the office will be open from 3pm.

Results.

Round 1.

Melbourne Knights 1
Jean Dubois
Dandenong City 0

St. Albans Saints 2
North Geelong Warriors 1

Round 2

Melbourne Knights 0
North Geelong Warriors 1

Dandenong City 1
St. Albans Saints

Round 3

Melbourne Knights 4
Y. Yusuf x2, F. Vulic, O.G.
St. Albans Saints

Dandenong City 1
North Geelong Warriors 2

FINAL

Melbourne Knights 4
A. Colosimo, J. Colosimo, Y. Yusuf, D. Dragicevic
North Geelong Warriors 0

Also a very big thank you to our volunteers, especially the referees in the group stage, Tony Kolceg, Paul Jurcic, Mate Gragic, Micky Colina, Mickey Jovanovic and Mark Talajic.

In preparation for the Alanic VPL, Oakleigh Cannons played a friendly with visiting Chinese Super League side, Green Town Hangzhou FC on Thursday 11th February at Knights Stadium.

Former Newcastle Jets, Adelaide United and Gold Coast Socceroo Adam Griffiths turned out for Green Town FC who are also in preparation mode but for the Asian Champions League. The visitors won 2-0.



Cannons keeper Daniel Neesham saves at the feet of Adam Griffiths. Photo: PETER KAKALIAS



Rong Hao of Hangzhou gets ready to pull the trigger as Oakleigh Cannons' Jimmy Downey closes in. Photo: PETER KAKALIAS





Alanic VPL Kicks Off!

By Robert Di Fabio

THE 2011 Alanic Victorian Premier League season is shaping up to be one of the most highly anticipated in recent history.

The gauntlet has been thrown, and defending champions Green Gully Cavaliers, under the helm of newly appointed coach Lubo Lapsanski, will be doing everything in their power to retain the crown of Victorian champions.

Throughout the course of the season we will witness 138 ardently contested fixtures which will determine the 2011 VPL champions.

New players will make a name for themselves, extravagant goals will be scored, uproar and controversy will be evident, coaches will come and go, and fans will be holding their breath with anticipation and tension. This is the glamour of the beautiful game.

Last season was a clear illustration of how even the competition has become in the top flight of Victorian football with a mere 9 points separating the finals contenders, and only 21 points the difference between minor premiers to relegation cellar dwellers.

On the final day of the home and away season, playing for top position, Richmond claimed the minor premiership by defeating Hume City. While at the other end of the scale the relegation battle went down to the final minutes with Sunshine and Altona Magic narrowly falling short of maintaining their status in the top flight.

This season we witness the introduction of the St Albans Saints and in addition Springvale White Eagles to the VPL.

In a remarkable turn of events the top 6 clubs in State League



Green Gully captain Jeff Fleming holds aloft the 2010 Alanic VPL trophy. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

One were only separated by 3 points. The promoted outfits accumulated the same number of points, 39, at the conclusion of the season. St Albans triumphed to win the title scarcely on goal difference. It was a wonderful finale and further exemplifies the strength of growing competition to ply one's trade at the pinnacle of Victorian football.

Do we expect the newly promoted clubs to prosper and cause headaches for the heavy weights of Victorian football? If we go by recent years, it's quite possible.

Last season we saw the newly promoted Northcote City appear in the finals series following a decorated campaign finishing fifth on the table and Trent Rixon grabbing the Golden Boot with a notable 19 goals in the process. No doubt club and player will be looking to have a similar impact this season.

The aurora of promotion allows clubs to strengthen their playing stocks, and St Albans and Springvale are not too dissimilar and have done just that with some

key signings.

In contrast to the many football leagues around the world, the VPL allows the competition to have an even playing field. It's not only an exciting prospect for the football community; however it allows all competing clubs to stamp their authority during the year.

While it's a difficult task predicting who will flourish throughout the season, it would be impractical to discount some of the well performed clubs of Victorian football - namely Green Gully, South Melbourne, Melbourne Knights and Richmond to name a few.

Expectations are also high at Oakleigh Cannons after a frenzy of transfer activity just before the deadline.

Following a season which saw South Melbourne miss the play-offs by a whisker, newly appointed coach Eddie Krncevic will be seeking to redeem the club's fortunes by making a solid tilt at the championship this season.

Anything short of a finals birth will be considered a failure given the statue and history that the club endorses on football within Australia. With so much to play for, many clubs will be attempting to stake an early claim on the competition.

The commencement of the 2011 Alanic VPL season is upon us. Will we see some of the old foes of Victorian football claim the honours once again, or will this season be a revolution where a changing of the guard is imminent?

As the VPL enters its second year of the five year sponsorship with Alanic, come Saturday, 3rd September, this season's fate will be decided and one team will stand alone and be \$30,000 the richer.

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Alanic VPL Opening Day Fixtures 2011

Tue 15 Feb KO 8:15PM N.T.C v Springvale White Eagles White Eagles Stadium
Fri 18 Feb KO 8:30PM Oakleigh Cannons v Northcote City Jack Edwards Reserve
Sun 20 Feb KO 3:00PM Richmond Eagles v Heidelberg Utd Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Sun 20 Feb KO 5:00PM South Melbourne v Green Gully Cavaliers John Cain Memorial
Sun 20 Feb KO 5:00PM St Albans Saints v Hume City Churchill Reserve
Sun 20 Feb KO 6:00PM Melbourne Knights v Dandenong Thunder Knights Stadium
Sun 20 Feb KO 7:00PM Bentleigh Greens v Springvale White Eagles Kingston Heath



How The Alanic VPL Was Won In 2010

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
1 Richmond Eagles (P)	22	12	4	6	33	26	7	40
2 Hume City	22	12	6	4	41	29	12	39
3 Green Gully Cavaliers	22	11	3	8	37	23	14	36
4 Heidelberg Utd	22	10	6	6	34	33	1	33
5 Northcote City	22	9	4	9	47	35	12	31
6 South Melbourne	22	10	6	6	41	28	13	30
7 Oakleigh Cannons	22	9	3	10	30	31	-1	30
8 Dandenong Thunder	22	9	4	9	24	30	-6	28
9 Melbourne Knights	22	7	5	10	30	37	-7	23
10 Bentleigh Greens	22	5	6	11	19	36	-17	21
11 Altona Magic (R)	22	5	5	12	39	46	-7	20
12 Sun George Cross (R)	22	5	4	13	20	41	-21	19

Week 1 Qualifying Final Hume City 1-3 Green Gully Cavaliers Green Gully advanced to Major Semi-Final. Hume City proceeded to Minor Semi-Final	Minor Semi-Final Hume City 3-0 Heidelberg United Hume City advanced to Preliminary Final, Heidelberg United eliminated
Elimination Final Heidelberg United 1-3 Northcote City Northcote City eliminated. Heidelberg United proceeds to Minor Semi-Final	Week 3 Preliminary Final Richmond Eagles 2-0 Hume City Richmond advanced to Grand Final Hume City eliminated
Week 2 Major Semi-Final Richmond 1-2 Green Gully Cavaliers Green Gully advanced to Grand Final, Richmond proceeded to Preliminary Final	Week 4 Alanic VPL Grand Final Green Gully Cavaliers 2-0 Richmond Eagles Saturday 11th September, AAMI Park, KO 7.30pm Crowd: 3000
Champions: Green Gully Cavaliers	

Under 21s - Final Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pt
South Melbourne	24	19	4	1	70	26	59	
Richmond	24	14	3	7	50	31	45	
N.T.C	24	11	9	4	66	42	41	
Green Gully Cavaliers	24	11	5	8	45	48	38	
Oakleigh Cannons	24	8	10	6	44	38	31	
Hume City	24	9	7	8	58	44	29	
Northcote City	24	7	9	8	52	47	27	
Heidelberg Utd	24	9	5	10	32	36	27	
Altona Magic	24	6	8	10	28	42	25	
Melbourne Knights	24	8	3	13	38	47	24	
Bentleigh Greens	24	7	4	13	29	47	23	
Sunshine George Cross	24	5	3	16	28	69	16	
Dandenong Thunder	24	2	10	12	21	44	10	



Green Machine Oiled For Action

By Robert Di Fabio

Former NSL participants and reining Victorian Premier League Champions- Green Gully Cavaliers will be entering the new VPL season with much optimism and high expectations.

Following an exceedingly successful season in 2010, Green Gully finished the home and away season in 3rd position and later on claimed the prestigious title of Victorian Champions by claiming a 3-0 victory in the Grand Final against Richmond at AAMI Park. Goals from Matthew Sanders, Graham Hockless and Daniel Jones helped secure their first Championship since 2005. It was a night invigorated with many fond memories and further enhanced the Cavaliers dominance in Victorian football.

The club has been crowned Victorian Champions on eight occasions- the most of any club in Victorian football's history. Rarely do the Cavaliers produce seasons of mediocrity. Since 2002 the Cavaliers have made finals appearances in all but two years- in simultaneous seasons the club merely missed the play-offs by finishing 6th in 2006-2007. Evidently, this exhibits the professionalism, charisma and in addition the willingness to succeed. These traits are ones which any football club would desire to uphold. A winning mentality is not an easy assignment to withstand, however the Cavaliers have proven over an extended period of time that triumph and success are apart of their football culture.

Newly appointed Cavalier's coach Lubo Lapsanski believes



The Green Machine will be one of the teams to beat in this year's AVPL as it prepares to defend its 2010 title. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

it's no coincidence that the club has been so successful, stating that good organisation skills from the top are essential for enduring success.

"It's a well run club as far as administration is concerned. They appoint the right people from the football side of things and have also got in place the right people on board for the coaching staff. They've signed the right players that are capable of winning a Championship. The board has done the right thing by everyone, and in turn the results will come", Lapsanski said.

Lapsanski is a former player with the club who is well respected by the football community. Following an impressive playing career which saw him represent Poprad FC in Slovakia, he later on claimed two NSL titles with the Melbourne Knights before ending his playing

days with the Cavaliers. After impressing while coaching the clubs' Under 21's in 2010, the board was pleased with his coaching philosophies and subsequently rewarded him with the senior role. Lapsanski feels his coaching style will draw an attractive brand of football, while a strong empathises will be on retaining possession and moving the ball forward quickly.

"We'll try to play good football obviously. We'll try to play football where we go forward and attack, try to keep the ball, try to entertain and obviously try to score more than we concede. So hopefully there will be a bit of entertaining stuff", he said.

Lapsanski's coaching values emphasises a strong correlation with team unity in contrast to individual flare. It's a core element which will be reiterated throughout the season. "We've really got an experienced

bunch of player's right throughout the whole team, so we don't depend on one player. You can mention the names from 1 to 21. Graham Hockless, Andy Vargas, Jeffrey Fleming- we've got the guys up front and the goalkeepers so everyone is just as important as the other. I don't really want to pick and choose, it's up to the squad to do well not individual players," Lapsanski said.

With a new coach at the helm it's never a simple task preparing for a new football season on the back of such a magnificent season prior. With an abundance of high expectations from the football fraternity, pressure will rightly be on the Cavaliers to replicate a similar performance to their Championship winning season. As we've witnessed in the past, comprising the title of defending Champions is not always an easy task to entail.

We only need to look back at the demise of Altona Magic.

"The pressure may ease off a bit given the club doesn't expect you to win the title again straight away. In saying that you want to win the title back to back. We'll take every game as we go along, obviously we want to finish as high as possible, however finishing in the top 6 would be our main target", said Lapsanski in relation to his season's ambitions.

There really isn't too much between the club's competing in the VPL, the competition seems to be very well balanced. When asked about title challengers, Lapsanski claimed that the even playing field of the VPL made it extremely difficult to predict potential winners.

"We've played four or five pre-season matches and it's hard to say who'll be around, but I'm assuming South Melbourne, Oakleigh and possibly Northcote will challenge. It's really hard given all the squad changes", he said.

The evenness of the competition was well illustrated last season with only 21 points separating top from bottom on the table. Furthermore, the top five were only separated by nine points, a staggering outcome.

Nevertheless, it's difficult to foresee Green Gully not making a significant impact in the 2011 VPL season. With such an enthusiastic squad and highly talented crop of players, it will come as an immense surprise if the Cavaliers didn't showpiece in the finals series and make a spirited challenge for the title.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1953
Ground Address: Kevin Bartlett Reserve, FR Smith Drive Burnley
VPL Championships: Minor Premiers 2010
President: Helmut Kalitzski
Coach: Michael Chatzitfonas
Assistant Coach: Huss Skenderovic
Captain: Dimitri Tsiaras
Finished last Season: Minor Premiers, runners up finals
Top Scorer in 2010: Daniel Visevic
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Michael Catalano

Squad List 2011
Ross Antoniadis
Yuval Ashkenazi
Evan Batsis
Mitchell Beamish
Mitchell Bissingner
Anthony Braha
Dean Campelj
Michael Catalano
Mate Eterovic
Michael Ferrante
Ivan Franjic
Bobbie Gagovski
Stjepan Gal
Emanuel Kambouris
Erhan Karahan
Antun Kovacic
Nicholas Krousoratis
Joshua Kweifo-Okai
Donald Maclaren
Benson Menjivar
Chris O'Hare
Ben Osei-Safo
Jonathan Parra
Hugh Pascoe
Damien Peters
Shaun Peterson
Timmy Purcell
Sam Shepherd
Robert Simeoni

By Mark Boric

A turbulent off-season for Richmond began within days of the disappointing AVPL Grand Final defeat by Green Gully as Jesse Krncevic and Steven Topalovic left to join South Melbourne after the appointment of Eddie Krncevic as coach at the Lakeside club.

Within weeks Tommy Milardovic and Daniel Visevic had signed for newly-promoted St Albans. The other promoted club from State League Division One, Springvale White Eagles, then lured back Milos Lujic, with Stefan Piorkowski following Milardovic and Visevic to St Albans not long into the pre-season. With club Best and Fairest winner Antun Kovacic trialling in Vietnam and Indonesia, the club was failing to retain as much of the 2010 AVPL Minor Premiership-winning squad as it would have wished.

The central midfield pairing of club captain Dimitri Tsiaras and mid-season star signing Michael Ferrante remained committed to the club, as did Stjepan Gal and Michael Catalano. With defenders Erhan Karahan, Andrew Viola and Mitch Bissingner all returning some stability was restored. Ross Antoniadis, unable to play a senior game for the club after sustaining a hamstring injury on the eve of the season, resumed pre-season training cautiously but looking every inch the ideal replacement for the departed Milardovic if his body stood up.

With the goalscoring ranks suffering most from the exodus, coach

Michael Chatzitrifonos would have been delighted with the pre-season form of youngster Davey van 't Schip. Chris O'Hare, a Warragul-based striker who spent four seasons in Nothern Ireland was signed to fill the void. Injury-plagued Alex Tabor made a welcome return late in pre-season.

Youngsters Mate Eterovic and Stuart Wilson have staked claims for senior selection, with Evan Batsis, Ben Osei-Safo and Donald Maclaren also making the senior squad. Goalkeeper Robbie Simeoni was another to return late in pre-season, having overcome the hip issues which hampered him in 2010. Irish signing Timmy Purcell arrived in late January, the midfielder having played for Shelbourne, University College Dublin and Waterford United in his native land.

Knee injuries marred the end of January, as firstly American defender Justin van Matre was ruled out for two months with cartilage damage. Then the season of van 't Schip was ended prematurely as he went down in training requiring a full reconstruction. It was a devastating blow for a player who was showing enormous promise.

After missing two years with a broken leg and then knee injuries, club favourite Semir Sivic is on the comeback trail, having completed much of the pre-season and played in small spells during some of the friendlies. A star in the making before sustaining a broken leg against Heidelberg United in 2008, he will have overcome the odds if he is able to play competitive football at AVPL level once again.

Pre-season friendly form was fairly unremarkable. An abundance



With Jess Krncevic (Far Left) gone to South Melbourne, and Davey van't Schip (2nd left) injured, the onus is on the rest Eagles squad to rise to the challenge which awaits ahead. Photo: ANITA MILAS

of trialists early in the peice featured in wins against Whittlesea Zebras and Oakleigh Cannons before Christmas. In the New Year there were defeats by Springvale White Eagles and St Albans, and draws with Northcote City, Melbourne Knights and Pascoe Vale. At short notice games were re-arranged for reasons varying from extreme heat to flooding.

Despite some of the disasters of pre-season, Chatzitrifonos will be quietly confident that his squad will once again be more than competitive in the coming season.

"There's certainly been a massive overhaul at the club especially in terms of the personnel, and it's not something I expected after our success of last year. To be frank, our pre-season has been nothing short of disruptive with issues both on and off the field. One of the

major blows during the preparation has been the injury sustained by Davey van't Schip to a serious knee injury which sees him out for the whole year. Things have really gone against us so far and even a week out from the first game we've got some key players who haven't trained properly as yet. But, I fairly confident that once we get all our players available and once we get the squad settled I'm fairly confident we'll be more than just a competitive team. We're not just here to make up the numbers and I know we'll be right in the mix.

"Losing Davey van't Schip so close to the start of the season has been a real tragedy for him and our club. For me, he was set to be the player of the league this season and I just wish him all the very best in his recovery." Asked who he thought will be the



Michael Chatzitrifonos, named Coach of the Year after leading the Eagles to the minor premiership in 2010, will enter his fourth year as senior coach. Once again he will be assisted by Huss Skenderovic. Photo: PETER PSARROS

front runners in this year's AVPL. Chatzitrifonos was quick to suggest that South Melbourne should be the favourites in probably the strongest competition he has seen in his time of coaching in the league. "If I was coach of South Melbourne I wouldn't be accepting anything less than first position. They can hand pick players, have got the goods, and anything below that would be a failure in my eyes. Apart from that, I think Oakleigh Cannons will be strong, as well as Heidelberg United and Hume City, who can all put a good case forward. I think it will be a very strong and competitive league and even the clubs who have been promoted will also be ones to look out for.

Whilst emulating the success of 2010 will be difficult, the club from Kevin Bartlett Reserve has already proven it is not to be underestimated.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1979
 Ground Address: Broadmeadows Valley Park, Cnr Malmesbury Drive & Pascoe Vale Rd.
 Mel: 6G3
VPL Championships: None
President: Sam Isik
Coach: Andy Vlahos
Assistant Coach: Joe Montagnese
Captain: Lupce Acevski
Finished last Season: 2nd
Top Scorer in 2010: Richie Cardozo
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Richie Cardozo

Lupce Acevski
 Keeny Gerohristodoulou
 Tansel Baser
 Michael Bosevski
 Slave Bozinovski
 Richie Cardozo
 Sam Dehaini
 Dusko Delic
 Fab Dilizia
 Andrew Doig
 Isyan Erdogan
 Mark McGough
 Adam Nakic
 Alfonso Opazo
 Steven Pace
 Zoran Petrevski
 Mark Pistininzi
 Phillip Riccobene
 Turhan Sumbul
 Ross Thompson
 Steven Weir
 Atilla Ofli
 Serdar Pir

Hume Builds For The Future

By Mike Lilikakis

AFTER being part of the Finals' bridal party for the last couple of seasons, Hume City is decking itself out, laying on the hard yards, waxing, plucking and grooming in order to go better, harder, longer, stronger, donger and take out the VPL Tiara as Top Dog.

Being pipped at the post by Gully and Richmond last season, Hume City has learnt some harsh lessons and has ground on down during the pre-season to silently, but surely, be a force to be reckoned with.

What is fascinating to discover, is how the infrastructure not only differs to the majority of VPL clubs, it has superceeded them from the grass level up. Hume City has a pioneering attitude, ground breaking visions and a community ethos which is endeavouring to work with various conventional moulds of ethnicity, yet not break with its roots. Media Officer Ezel Hikmet, is a down to earth plebian rather than a politician.

"The city of Hume is our focal point. We want to be a club for the community."

The visions for Hume City have been thought of by some as nothing short of revolutionary. The club believes in having a huge youth policy, a strong social club, being patient about growth, endorsing the demographic, spending approximately 5 million shmackos on the Club's redevelopment and infrastructure, laying out synthetic turf and promoting Hume City to the North-East suburbs as a centre-piece for the community to gather

round.

With Andy Vlahos at the helm for another craic, its hard to see Hume City drop out of the VPL, let alone miss a Finals berth.

"We're not looking to drop out of finals contention, but hope to go one step further. We were a little unlucky the last couple of seasons. Sure games are results based, but we've got big plans for the club and we'll only get there one game at a time. Consistency is the key."

Having retained 90% of the squad from last season, the pick ups have been a credit to Vlahos' skill as a striker both on and off the pitch. Vlahos' keen eye has picked up the likes of Steve Wier (Scotland), Mark McGough (Northcote), Andrew Doigsy (Shepparton), Slave Bozinovski (Altona Magic) and Kenny Gerohristodoulou (Green Gully).

When you add the depth and experience of Baser, Thomson, Delic, 'The Fonz' Arponozzo, Erdogan, Steve Pace, Zoki Petrevski, Richie Cardozo, Louie Acevski and Andy Vlahos; hang on....aren't you quaking in your Nike's yet? Jokes aside, unlike other clubs which have spent big on 'name' players in the quest for VPL glory; Hume City has recruited well, solidified its squad and with the addition of half a dozen talented youths look set for being a mainstay for the years to come. In complete consistency with its visions as a club which is set to grow exponentially within 5 years, the team has the makings of something special and historic.



Striker Richie Cardozo will again provide much of the fire power for the ambitious Hume City.
 Photo: ANITA MILAS



The strength of Turhan Sumbul exemplifies the depth of Hume's squad.
 Photo: ANITA MILAS



Zoran Petrevski will once again be a handful for AVPL defences in this year's competition and hopes to carry Hume City to success.
 Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

New Faces Boost Bergrers

By John Fotinos

HEIDELBERG UNITED goes into the 2011 Alanic VPL season with a sense of genuine optimism in challenging for ultimate honours this year, having last won the VPL Premiership back in 2001.

On the back of several changes in its playing roster, the club also has a new president at the helm along with the signing of a new major naming rights sponsor. The general mood at the Olympic Village is one of a team united on & off the pitch, determined to put the club back at the forefront of the Victorian football landscape.

With the departure of several senior players such as Kozic, Matkovic, Tilovski, Byles & Alilovic, the club has been very active in the transfer market. Joining the club in 2011 are high-profile recruits in Adrian Caceres (from Wellington Phoenix), Hamlet Armenian (from Dandenong Thunder), Sime Kovacevic (from Altona Magic), goalkeeper Griffin McMaster (from Oakleigh Cannons), evergreen defender George Papadopoulos (from Northcote City), Andrew Nabbout (Sunshine Georgies), Evan Christodoulou (Sunshine Georgies), Richard Greer, along with international recruits Takanori Nishimoto (from Japan), Panagiotis Vois (from Europe), Michael Kelly (from Ireland)



New Berger Adrian Caceres
 Photo: KON DEVES



Opa! Opa! Already a hit with the ladies at Olympic Village is Heidelberg's new signing from Greece, Peter Vois. Photo: KON DEVES

and striker Ben Wearing (from the UK).

The club is expecting continued development from youngsters John Lazaridis, Leslie Doumbalis, Yared Hailemeleket & Jason Koutsodontis, all who have come up through the club's Under 21 team, and had a taste of senior football during the 2010 season.

New club captain Craig Elvin will lead the defence in 2011, along with the ever-reliable Steve Martin. Joining the ranks is 'keeper Griffin McMaster, who replaces the recently retired Steven Tilovski.

The defensive stocks have been boosted with the addition of Sime Kovacevic & the popu-

lar George Papadopoulos, who seems likely to become a cult-figure at the club he supported for many years as a youngster.

Youngsters Doumbalis, Hailemeleket and Lazaridis also form part of the Heidelberg defensive unit, with the latter returning to full fitness and a permanent spot in the starting line-up after missing much of the 2010 season through injury.

With the signing of attack-minded players such as former A-League star Adrian Caceres, along with speedy flankers like Hamlet Armenian, Andrew Nabbout along with Richard Greer,

Michael Kelly and Takamori Nishimoto, there should be no shortage of creativity from the Heidelberg midfield.

With Paul Miller likely to hold down an anchoring role in the middle, the Heidelberg forwards will be hoping for good supply from its midfield partners.

Up front, Heidelberg will rely on its scoring from established regulars in the form of Saso Aleksovski, George Slefendorfas, and the always exciting Osagie Ederaro.

They will be joined in attack by new signings Panagiotis Vois, a 25-year-old striker originally from Greece, but who has plied his trade in the second-tier leagues in Germany, Estonia and Holland over the past 10 years,

and UK import Ben Wearing, who arrives in the country in the next few weeks.

Continuity in the coaching ranks is the theme for 2011, with George Katsakis again taking the reins, assisted by Jeff Olver, with Andy Bozikas retained as coach of the Under 21 squad.

Off the pitch, the club is pleased to announce its major sponsor for the 2011 season will be Niko's Greek Tavern, and with Regal Ballroom also on board, the club is well-placed to start the 2011 season on a firm footing.

With the kick-off to the 2011 season just a week away, the team has had a solid pre-season, culminating with it winning a spot in the annual Hellenic Cup Final on Saturday February 12, finishing as runner-up to South Melbourne. The team rounds out its preparations this Monday (February 14) night at 7:30pm with a game against the visiting Chinese Superleague team Hangzhou Greentown FC at the Olympic Village.

For its opening match in the 2011 season, Heidelberg United travel to Kevin Bartlett Reserve on Sunday February 20 at 3:00pm to take on 2010 Grand Finalist, Richmond, ahead of its opening home game the following Sunday against Bentleigh Greens.

FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1953
 Ground Address: Olympic Village, Heidelberg West
 Mel: 19 D11
VPL Championships: 4 - 1975, 1988, 1990, 2001
President: Peter Theos
Coach: George Katsakis
Assistant Coach: Jeff Olver-
Captain: Craig Elvin
Finished last Season: 4th
Top Scorer in 2010: Sash Aleksovski
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Yianni Galanos

Squad List

Christopher Ailakis
 Saso Alekovski
 Nikolaos Argyrakakis
 Hamlet Armenian
 Adrian Caceres
 Giacomo Caruso
 Michael Demarco
 Evan Christodoulou
 Mathew Cundari
 Michael Demarco
 Barry Devlin
 Leslie Doumbalis
 Osagie Ederaro
 Craig Elvin
 Michael Ermsley
 Senesios Frangos
 Richard Greer
 Yared Hailemeleket
 Anthony Iosifidis
 Alexander Karamouzis
 Nikolas Katsakis
 Michael Kelly
 Jason Koutsodontis
 John Koutsodontis
 Sime Kovacevic
 Ilker Kuyucu
 Adam Lapenta
 John Lazaridis
 Paul Manicas
 Griffin McMaster
 Paul Miller
 Andrew Nabbout
 Takanori Nishimoto
 George Papadopoulos
 Steven Sabelberg
 Jason Samargis
 George Stefendorfas
 Christopher Stefani
 Matthew Tancevski
 Nicolas Travis
 James Vassiliou
 Steve Martin



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1960
Ground Address: John Cain Memorial Park Mel: 31 A6
VPL Championships: None
President: Jim Makrozahopoulos
Coach: Peter Tsolakis
Assistant Coach: Goran Lozanovski
Captain: Trent Rixon
Finished last Season: 5th
Top Scorer in 2010: Trent Rixon 19 oals
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Trent Rixon 11 Votes

Alvaro Carrillo
Christian Cassar
Adrian Chiappetta
Roddy Covarrubias
Nicholas Curtis
Hayden D'Agostino
Chris Di Bartolo
George Giannou
Ricky Gonzales
Shino Ismail
Antoni Jankovski
James Kalifatidis
Harry Kinigopoulos
Burak Kocak
Christopher Theodoridis-Petrooulos
Kristian Konstandinidis
Nikolas Kostadinovski
Matthew Lazarides
Patrick Mancuso
George McHeileh
Dean Piemonte
Jimmy Pyrgolios
Trent Rixon
Patrick Sartorie
Paul Savio
Damian Siljanoski
Ciaran Smyth
Eddie Soares
Sam Torrens

Charlie Treacy
Glen Trifiro
Jason Trifiro
Nick Tzoulis
Billy Vasilopoulos
Jonathan Voulgaris
Aaron Ward
Sandrow Yalda

Blues Continue To Surprise

By Tony Persoglia

IN some respects, the story of the 2010 Alanic Victorian Premier League season, was the way in which unfancied Northcote City took all before them to book a debut appearance in the post-season finals series.

Tipped by most pundits to occupy a position in the relegation zone, the team led by Peter Tsolakis, played an enterprising brand of football which yielded more goals than any other club, a Golden Boot winner and a string of impressive displays.

The character of the squad was epitomised during the chaotic 'lights-out' episode, where the Round 19 match against Dandenong Thunder was abandoned early in the second half, the Blues in a commanding 4-1 position. Despite attempts to have the result stand via the federation tribunal, the match was rescheduled after the season's home-and-away conclusion. A lesser team may have capitulated amidst the uncertainty and the subsequent pressure of the mini-elimination final, but City put in its finest performance of the season at the Veneto Club, replicating the 4-1 scoreline in a scintillat-



Striker Trent Rixon, winner of the 2010 Golden Boot.
Photo: PETER PSARROS



Northcote City welcomes back James Kalifatidis from Melbourne Victory youth team duties. Photo: PETER PSARROS

ing display of breathtaking football. City were later out-classed by the more experienced Heidelberg United in the club's first ever final, but took many positives from their return season in the top flight.

The continuing rise of Trent Rixon was a feature of the club's success in 2010. Rixon scored 19 goals in the regular season, which included two inspiring hat-tricks against Heidelberg United (one of the burgeoning rivalries of the competition) and a brace against South Melbourne in a thrilling 3-3 draw in Round 3. The club has done well to retain Rixon's services, and the

talismanic striker will partner James Kalifatidis in one of the league's most lethal strike combinations, which yielded 29 goals in 2010.

Kalifatidis himself has enjoyed regular football over the summer, where he is joint top scorer for the Melbourne Victory in their 2011 National Youth League campaign. City will also be banking on the continued development of Jonathan Voulgaris, who showed glimpses of brilliance last season, and the welcome return from a knee injury of George Giannou, who may prove to be one of the 'recruits' of the season.

However, it is the inclusion

of Sydney born brothers Glen and Jason Trifiro that bring about an air of anticipation at John Cain Memorial Park.

The former Australian youth internationals have impressed in their pre-season form since arriving at the club at the turn of the year, adding class and depth to an experienced mid-field, with Mark McGough, Nick Curtis and Eddie Soares all battling for starting positions. Their signing is another illustration of the club's focus on youth over experience, a characteristic which has been symbolic of the Peter Tsolakis reign. While Northcote will hope that the Trifiro youngsters can

feed Rixon and company, the defense has been gutted by the departure of club legend George Papadopoulos (Heidelberg United) and Bradley Norton (Adelaide United).

The line will be ably led by Antoni Jankovski, Hayden D'Agostino, Sam Torrens (South Melbourne) and Adrian Chiappetta, who along with goalkeeper Chris Theodoridis, played in every match last season. Chiappetta in particular had his breakthrough season in 2010, and will be hoping to overcome a pre-season knee injury to take his place in leading the defensive line.

The inclusions of Dean Piemonte (Bentleigh Greens) and Kristian Konstantinidis (FC Bulleen) complete the season signings for the Darebin based club, but undoubtedly, the key signing for the club has been the acquisition of former Socceroo Goran Lozanovski to the coaching staff. The 2007 Championship winning coach with Preston Lions will provide another avenue of knowledge and all important experience at the Premier League level to the off field setup at the club. His signature may be the most important ingredient in Northcote City's ambition to take the next step in 2011.



FAST FACTS

Team Club Formed: 1959
Ground Address: John Cain Memorial Park, Darebin Rd. Thornbury
VPL Championships: 8 – 1962, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1972, 1974, 1976, 2006
President: Leo Athanasakis
Coach: Eddie Krncevic
Assistant Coach: Joe Montemurro
Captain: Steven O'Dor
Finished Last Season: 6th
Top Goal Scorer in 2010: Fernando De Moraes - 13
Most Gold Medal Votes in 2010: Fernando De Moraes, 19 votes, Winner

Squad List 2011
1 Stefaan Sardelic
3 Rhodri Payne
4 Steven O'Dor
5 Daniel Vasilevski
6 Steven Topalovic
7 Joseph Keenan
8 Carl Recchia
9 Gianni De Nittis
10 Yanni Galanos
11 Jesse Krncevic
12 Brad Treloar
15 Fernando De Moraes
16 Trent Waterson
17 Mackie Simmons
18 Marino Gasparis
19 Leigh Minopoulos
20 Abdelhadi Deroune
21 Zaim Zeneli
22 Devon Bonne
23 Sebastian Petrovic
24 Nick Jacobs
25 Kyle Joryeff

By John Kyrrou

South Melbourne FC will enter season 2011 confident in challenging for the League Championship, something that has eluded the club since defeating Altona Magic 1-0 in the 2006 Victorian Premier League Grand Final.

South experienced a year of ups and downs in 2010, which began in February with a penalty shoot-out loss against the Bentleigh Greens in the Hellenic Cup final. The Blues began the League season slowly but gradually built up good form heading into the RHB Singapore Cup first round against Gombak United in May. South recorded a historic 2-1 victory over Gombak but suffered a hangover when returning to Melbourne, gaining only nine points from a possible 18 and slipping out of the top five.

With five matches left in the League campaign and with a finals position looking grim, South turned things around and recorded three wins and two draws to finish the regular season in fifth spot. However, it needed to rely on a drawn match between Northcote City and Dandenong Thunder in a match played three days after the final round of matches in order to secure a finals position. Northcote had other ideas and denied South a finals spot by defeating the Thunder 4-1 the following Wednesday.

With the League season over, coach Vaughan Coveny was replaced by Eddie Krncevic, who returned for his second stint as South manager, having coached South in the 2001/02 National Soccer



South Melbourne added the Thrifty Cup to the trophy cabinet after touring Tasmania. Photo: WALTER PLESS

League season. Krncevic needed to keep his players fresh for six weeks before meeting Bangkok Glass in the RHB Singapore Cup quarter finals. In this time, goalkeeper Peter Zois departed so Krncevic elevated reserve goalkeeper Stefaan Sardelic to senior keeper.

Despite losing the first leg 1-3, South outplayed their opponents from Thailand in the second leg and was incredibly unlucky not to win in a thrilling 3-3 draw. Bangkok Glass went on to win the competition so it was no disgrace that a semi-professional South Melbourne side lost to the eventual Cup winners, who were a professional side.

South has enjoyed a solid pre-season in 2011, traveling to Tasmania and winning the Thrifty Cup following a 5-0 victory over Tasma-

nian champions South Hobart. In the Hellenic Cup, South navigated its way through the group stage and reached the final against Heidelberg United. At the time of writing, the match had not been played yet.

Expectations are high at the club in 2011, with the club aiming to make the finals and win the Championship. A big season is expected from 2010 VPL Gold Medalist, Theo Marmaras Medalist (South player of the year) and South Golden Boot winner Fernando De Moraes, who is two goals shy of becoming only the eighth player in the Club's history to score 50 League goals. New signing Jesse Krncevic is also expected to have a good year following a solid pre-season that has seen many goals scored.

On a sad note, 2009 and 2010

Club captain Rama Tavsancioglu left during the Hellenic Cup and signed with Oakleigh Cannons. Many stories have circulated throughout the pre-season about the reasons behind Tavsancioglu's departure, however what was obvious was that the former captain was not firmly in coach Krncevic's immediate plans for 2011.

Despite signing elsewhere, Tavsancioglu departs South with his head held high following 6 seasons at Lakeside for 136 League appearances and 7 League goals. 'Rama' was a valuable member of the 2006 VPL championship side and the victorious 2007 and 2009 Hellenic Cup sides (the latter as captain). Most importantly, he captained the Club in its 50th year in 2009 as well as in 2010. An immensely



Brazilian playmaker Fernando De Moraes with the 2010 Gold Medal Award. Photo: PETER PSARROS

popular player with supporters, he is a player and personality that will be missed.

With Lakeside Stadium still undergoing renovations, South will play all of its home matches in 2011 at Northcote City's John Cain Memorial Park. South faces a tough opening month of the season, hosting Champions Green Gully in the opening round before traveling to newly promoted Springvale White Eagles. A home match against Bentleigh is then followed by a tough away trip to Heidelberg, a side that South has not beaten in the League in four seasons.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1972
Ground Address: Jack Edwards Res, Oakleigh, Edward St, Oakleigh, Mel: 69 H9
VPL Championships: Minor Premiers 2006
President: Stan Papayiannaris
Coach: Arthur Papas
Assistant Coaches: Bill Theodoropoulos and Nino Ragusa
General Manager : Aki Ionnas
Captain: Peter Zois
Finished last Season: 7th
Top Scorer in 2010: Jerry Karpeh (10 goals)
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Jerry Karpeh
Support Staff : Eric Martin

Squad List 2011:

Peter Zois	GK
Daniel Neesham	GK
Manny Papas	GK
Andrew Giannos	GK
Jamie Cumming	
Zac Cairncross	
Ari Drakos	
Ante Cicak	
Brian Bran	
John Fitzgerald	
Neven Antic	
Rama Tavancioglu	
Bill Damianos	Luke Walker
Scott Webster	Ashley Savanah
Jim Downey	Bonel Obradovic
Frank Lagana	Craig Goodwin
Stephen Hatzikostas	Melvin Becket
Shaun Ontong	Dane Milovanovic
Michael Curcija	Anthony Ragusa
Ricky Diaco	Simon Zappia
Andrew Barisic	Chris Frangou
James Robinson	Philip Ajao
Dean Panagopoulos	

Papas sets sights on top five

By Craig MacKenzie

OAKLEIGH Cannons have the youngest coach in the Alanic VPL, probably the largest first-team squad and a burning desire to play finals football for the first time in four years.

Having finished seventh for the past three seasons Oakleigh was expected to again go with an experienced senior coach but the Jack Edwards reserve outfit decided to roll the dice and hired 30-year-old Arthur Papas.

It's not the first time that Oakleigh has bitten the bullet regarding a coaching appointment. Some years back an untried senior coach called Michael Chatzitirifonos was hired and took the club back into the VPL in his first season.

But the Papas appointment is different. He has worked as an assistant at Altona Magic and Melbourne Knights, has spent the past two years working alongside Jan Versleijen at the Institute of Sport in Canberra and expects to complete his AFC A-licence later this year. He also has an impressive academic background in exercise science and access to a database of some of the finest young football talent in the land.

"Although I'm still a developing coach we have set ourselves the target of finishing in the top five," said Papas.

"I looked at the squad when I took over and it clearly needed to be revamped and we've worked hard to freshen things up.

"We have significant losses from last year's squad. When you talk



AVPL defenders will have to be on their toes as perennial goal poacher Michael Curcija will lead the attack for the Cannons, along with James Robinson and Andrew Barisic. Photo: DANIEL FLIS

about players such as (Stelios) Drakos, Karpeh, Watson, Kalmar, McMaster and Yusef you are talking about quality.

"We have had roughly a 70 percent turnover from last year's squad. But that's similar to what happened at Altona (Magic) the year they won the championship."

The squad at Papas' disposal numbers 27 which includes what he describes as project players. He has added players with A-League pedigree and young players he has tracked through development pathways and has 13 under-21 players in the squad.

A major signing is Ramazan Tavancioglu from South Melbourne. The 26-year-old defender has played on short-term contracts with North Queensland Fury during the current A-league season.

Richmond and Melbourne Victory fans will be well aware of the talents of another addition in James Robinson, who has recovered from a long-term injury suffered during his time at North Queensland Fury. Another two new signings have also faced up to long-term injuries. Left-back Ante Cicak, a former Australian youth international and AIS scholarship holder was injured at Croatian giant Hajduk Split and hasn't played for 12 months. Holding midfielder Shaun Ontong, ex-Newcastle Jets, Adelaide United and a former young Socceroo captain, also has had a long injury-enforced lay-off but that doesn't faze Papas.

"These players know my background and they know I can help get them right. Ante's body is not at the right level yet but he'll get there



On his day Ricky Diaco has the ability to torment opposition with spectacular fashion. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

while Shaun has only been here for a couple of weeks and we're looking at perhaps late March for him." Peter Zois has been signed from South Melbourne and the Melbourne Heart goalkeeping coach will be the club's number one custodian.

Midfielder Frankie Lagana returns to the fold after spells with Melbourne Knights and Scottish outfit Airdrie. Lagana played for State Two outfit Diamond Valley at the tail end of last season.

Three young signings are tall ex-Joeys central defender Bryan Bran, from Melbourne Knights, Adelaide Croatia winger Craig Goodwin and central defender Zac Cairncross. "Bran is 19 and he's good in the air as you'd expect from someone with his height.

"People won't know much about

Goodwin but he was under-21 player of the season in South Australia and he is very quick and technically gifted.

"Cairncross played a few A-League matches for Sydney a few seasons ago. He is still just 21 and is 193 centimetres and very strong and he's been a fantastic addition to the squad."


Another important signing has seen Melbourne Victory youth player Steve Hatzikostas return to the fold and the 19-year-old is expected to play a prominent role this season.

Players retained from last season include Michael Curcija, Ricky Diaco, Bill Damianos, Scott Webster, John Fitzgerald, Ari Drakos, Neven Antic, Jamie Cummings and Dean Panagopoulos.

Papas only watched four of Oakleigh's games last year but he has studied DVDs of many more of the club's 2010 matches and he quickly identified areas that he wanted to improve.

"One of the changes I felt was needed was a lot more speed and mobility especially in the midfield and front thirds. I have a style of play that I like to see and we definitely aim to play through the lines with an emphasis on quick passing and keeping the ball on the ground as much as possible."

There's stiff competition and great depth within this year's squad and they are two factors that Papas hopes will enable the club to achieve its finals aim.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1964
Ground Address: George Andrews Reserve, Trewin Street, Dandenong
VPL Championships: Minor Premiers 2009
President: Mykhail Emini
Coach: Stuart Munro
Assistant Coach: TBA
Captain: Veton Korcari
Finished last Season: 7th
Top Scorer in 2010: Jamie Reed
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Shane Rexhepi

Stuart Webster

Kyle Lapham (Swindon Super Marine, UK)
Steven Gray (Ireland)
Shane Rexhepi
Ben Harrison (Gld Coast Youth)
Luke Sherbon
Mathew Theodore (Altona Magic)
Chris Taylor (Swindon Super Marine, UK)
Veton Korcari (C)
Liam Kearney (Ireland)
Alex Rojas (Bentleigh Greens)
Steven Cook (Swindon Super Marine, UK)
Acim Tomic (Gold Coast Youth)
Rinor Muriqi (Dandenong City)
Jason Corbett (Western Suburbs)
Chachi Elmazi
Denis Ukali
Jarred Byrnes (Casey Comets)
Feston Axis
Terjan Imerovski
Sermin Sadikovski

Thunder Prepare to Strike

By Mersim Aliu

DANDENONG Thunder will enter their third successive year in the Alanic Victorian Premier League with a squad full of fresh faces as it targets Victorian Premier League success in 2011.

After the club won the Minor Premiership in 2009 by winning the league by 12 points, the club than faced a difficult season in 2010 with key players from the 2009 side with of the likes of Colin Quirk, Sam Bailey and Aaron Clapham not returning to the club; whilst last season's leading goalscorer Jamie Reed joined the club mid-season, rather than the start of the 2010 campaign as expected.

With Munro joining A-League club Perth Glory as an assistant coach during the offseason, his mind was still firmly on the job at the Thunder working hard at bringing in new players as he attempts to build a squad capable of reaching the summit of Victorian football. The club embarked on a big recruitment drive for the upcoming year, with Munro identifying talent from various parts with recruits not only coming from Victoria, but also Queensland, Ireland, New Zealand and England.

The club has lost many players from last year's squad headed by the experienced Lev Osman (retired), goal scoring machine Jamie Reed (signed for English club York City, left back Jeff Bright (returned to Perth for personal reasons), right back Ben Starosta (who received interest from clubs



Expectations are high this year for Luke Sherbon after bursting on to the scene last season. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

in MLS), Aron Wilford, Scott Bulloch and Ryan Davidson (all Bentleigh).

With the club losing the experience of 3 time best and fairest winner Lev Osman due to retirement, it was important for the club to secure a defender with experience and leadership; hence the signing of big Irish centre back Steve Gray. The 29 year old who has spent time at English club Southampton, was recruited from Ireland and was a player Munro was really excited about, with his prowess in the air and ability to with stand opponents a real strength of the centre half.

With Dandenong's midfield being a weakness for the club last

season, it was vital that the club secure talented players to strengthen the midfield and the club has done that with a plumb. Into the side comes in classy midfielder Mathew Theodore, skilful midfielder Alex Rojas and Chris Taylor a midfielder from the U.K who possesses great passing skills and has the ability to unlock defences at ease.

Dandenong's prized signing over the summer was that of 21 year old attacking midfielder Mathew Theodore from Altona Magic. The former Melbourne Victory player caught the attention of many at the club with some eye catching performances for the Magic in 2010.



Former Victory player Matthew Theodore will be one to watch this season. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

In the preseason hit-outs Theodore has formed a great partnership in midfielder with Rojas and linked quite well with captain Veton Korcari; which saw the youngster score in a 2-1 friendly win over South Melbourne as well as in the 2-0 win over St Albans. With a big preseason under his belt, expect big things from Theodore in 2011.

Midfield general Luke Sherbon has returned to the club after his arrival mid season last year. The hard nosed defender made a huge impact during his short stay at the club last year, with his signature a great boost for the club. The ex Leeds united apprentice is in great shape heading into round 1 and is buzzing at playing out a full sea-

son for Dandenong and has targeted that elusive Victorian Premier League title.

Other key signings for the club for season 2011 include exciting Irish winger Liam Kearney. The former Nottingham Forrest player spent time with the club's other new recruit Steve Gray at Derry City and Victorian Premier League followers will be keen to keep a close eye on Kearney who is a tricky winger who has the ability to take on defender at ease with his pace and skill, whilst also having a knack at scoring goals.

Dandenong Thunder also signed Queensland duo Ben Harrison and Acim Tomic, with left back Harrison recruited from the Gold Coast United Youth club. Other new additions to the squad include New Zealander Nathan Knox, with the tall striker signed from Otaga United, whilst having also spending time with Seattle Sounders in the MLS.

With the club making a host of signings, add to that the experience in goal with Stuart Webster who is like a fine wine, getting better with age; vice captain Shane Rexhepi who has set the tone during preseason as well as the skipper Veton Korcari who has got a terrific preseason under his belt, scoring goals and setting up chances for his team mates and over the groin injuries which hampered him during last year; season 2011 looks to be an exciting one ahead for the Dandenong Thunder.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1953
Ground Address: Knights Stadium, 2 Somers Street, North Sunshine, VIC, 3020
VPL Championships: 3 - 1968, 1977, 1978
President: Ange Cimera
Coach: Ivan Duzel
Assistant Coach: Paul Magdic
Captain: Ben Surey
Finished last Season: 9th
Top Scorer in 2010: Kevin Townson (13 Goals)
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: Kevin Townson (18 votes)

Aaron Romein	GK
Ryan Filipović	D
Josip Franjić	D
Leo Shin	D
Craig Sweeney	M
Daniel Dragičević	F
Martin John	GK
Rudi Saglam	F
Yusuf Yusuf	F
Amadu Koroma	M
Anthony Colosimo	M
Shayan Alinejad	F
Jacob Colosimo	F
Adam Žilić	F
James Stefanou	D
Shaun Romein	M
Josip Magdić	M
Júnior De Camargo	D
Jean-Charles Dubois	F
Josip Kozic	M
Ben Surey	M

Knights Armed And Ready To Shine

By David Manuca

IT'S been a long time since the Melbourne Knights have won a major trophy; 15 years to be exact, when they were crowned champions of the now defunct National Soccer League.

The closest the Knights have come in recent times to becoming champions is when they finished runner-up in the 2008 Victorian Premier League season. In the past two seasons they have finished 9th, and coach Ivan Duzel thinks the Knights will be pushing for a Top-5 finish this season.

"We've played about six or seven games so far this pre-season and from what I have seen the team is gelling especially well so I believe we are going to be very competitive this year," said Duzel.

"There are a lot of new players who have joined the club this season and they will all be looking to impress."

"I think if our young players can lift their game this season we could definitely challenge for the title."

"If these kids can work just 10-15% harder in training and on the pitch, with the mix between our young players and experienced players in our squad, I believe we should be pushing for a top-5 finish this season."

The Knights have made a number of signings in the off-season to bolster the squad for the up-coming campaign. New faces for the 2011 season include: Martin John, Shaun Romein, Craig Sweeney (all Sunshine George Cross),



The Knights will be looking towards Jean-Charles Dubois to reproduce the sensational form of last year. Photo: STEVE STAREK

Hrvoje Matkovic, Josip Kozic (both Heidelberg United), Shayan Alinejad (Knox City), Rivan Saglam (Fawkner Blues), Amadu Koroma (Glenorchy Knights) and Daniel Dragicevic (North Geelong Warriors).

Martin John returns to the Knights after spending seven years at the Sunshine Georgies where he was best and fairest in both the 2009/10 seasons. He was a part of the Knights in the NSL for six seasons between 1998-2003.

"One of the most important signings we've made this season is definitely Martin John. He will give us security in defence and in our six-yard box; something that we really lacked last year," said Duzel.

"He is a very good and mature goalkeeper and he will be one of my leaders this season."

John decided to leave the Sunshine Georgies after they were relegated to the State League last season.

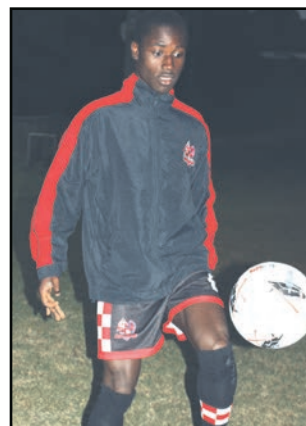
"I like playing in a good league because you get to play on good grounds, you get good crowds, it's where I want to play," John told the Brimbank Weekly.

"I don't want to be playing second division. You want to play at the highest level for as long as you can."

Melbourne Knights have had a big pre-season, travelling to Tasmania for the first time since 2002 and hosting the Friendship Cup against Sydney United.

The Knights played two exhibition matches against Glenorchy Knights and a Glenorchy/Tasmanian Institute of Sport select team, winning both games.

After trailing 1-0 at half-time, Knights coach Ivan Duzel brought



Amadu Koroma joins from Glenorchy Knights. Photo: WALTER PLESS

on striker Jean Dubois with the Frenchman scoring two goals giving Melbourne a 2-1 victory.

The Knights found the Glenorchy/TIS select side a much easier proposition, thrashing them 7-0 with seven different goal scorers.

Former Glenorchy striker Amadu Koroma opened the scoring, with Josip Magdic, Ben Surey, Craig Sweeney, Jacob Colosimo, Rudi Saglam, Josip Magdic and Jean Dubois all getting on the score sheet.

"After what I saw from the boys in our two friendlies in Tasmania I believe that we will be a strong force in the Premier League this season," Duzel said.

"We played some quality football on some brilliant pitches over in Hobart and the players really enjoyed it. It was a very good trip and I hope they can bring that form into the premier league sea-

son this year."

Melbourne Knights also hosted the Sydney United in the annual Friendship Cup, defeating United 1-0 in a hard-fought battle at Knights Stadium.

With ravishing floods affecting Melbourne the night before, a crowd of over 800 braved the weather and turned up to witness the Knights win back the Friendship Cup thanks to a goal from youngster Daniel Dragicevic.

Duzel was happy with the hit-out and thinks the team will improve even further when he has a full squad to choose from.

"I was very happy with our performance against Sydney United, especially considering the amount of players who still are yet to join the team," he said.

"We played some good football for 50-60 minutes in the match and created some good goal scoring opportunities so I am very happy with how things are shaping up." My Prediction: I agree with Duzel in saying the Knights will be pushing for a top-5 finish this season.

The Knights have brought in a number of talented young players along with an experienced defender and goalkeeper so they should definitely be making it to the finals this season. Consistency will be key.

Players to watch: Jean-Charles Dubois, Ben Surey, Amadu Koroma, Daniel Dragicevic and Junior Camargo are all players to look out for at the Melbourne Knights in 2011!

O'Dell: Gully, Souths teams to beat

By Craig MacKenzie

ANDY O'Dell came out swinging on the weekend slamming his critics and adding to his colourful reputation.

"I've been called everything during my time coaching in Australia, mate. I've been called a paedophile, a gangster, you name it but the more the muppets talk crap about me the more I like it," said the Bentleigh Greens head coach.

"I don't go on about this much but I've won nine championships as a coach and I'd love to win this one (the VPL) just to stick it right up them."

To that end the man from Hull has organised a massive cleanout during the off-season after clinging onto the club's VPL status by just one point last year.

"Last year was a non-event for the club and the last six games (after replacing Goran Lozanovski) were the hardest I've ever faced," said O'Dell.

"There was no confidence and too many players were there for the wrong reasons so I got rid of them."

The burgeoning list of newcomers includes former VIS, West Ham, Peterborough, South Melbourne and Sydney FC defender Steve Laurie and ex-George Cross captain Wayne Wallace who is back here on a visa and will add steel to the Greens midfield setup.

Wallace, who didn't start playing football until he was 17, kicked off his career with Bridlington Town and could prove to be a major coup for the Greek Cypriot-backed Greens.

He arrived at George Cross for the



Greens coach Andy O'Dell. Photo: DARRYL KENNEDY

2008 season as a central midfielder but proved his versatility by filling in as a central defender during the club's charge to the State One championship.

Wallace played a vital role as a central midfielder the following season as George Cross convincingly cemented its VPL status.

Three Dandenong Thunder signings – left-sided player Scott Bullock, central defender Aron Wilford and midfielder Ryan Davidson – have been brought in along with midfielder Greg Lombardo from Whittlesea, striker Billy Gasparinatos from Oakleigh and second string keeper Kile Kennedy, a former Dandy Thunder custodian who has played in the US.

Former Stoke City and Perth Glory midfielder Hayden Doyle has been signed from WA.

Adelaide-born Doyle, who turns 22 later this month, grew up playing junior football in Bunbury



After a major clear out during the summer and some shrewd signings, Greens could be one of the dark horses of this year's VPL. Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

before moving to England as a 16-year-old to join Stoke's youth academy. After failing to break into the first team, he joined Greek club Niki Volos for the 2007-08 season. On 20 June 2008, Doyle returned to Australia to join Perth Glory, the club he had supported since he was a young boy. He debuted for Glory that year in a 1-0 loss against Adelaide United.

Doyle has had stints with Mandurah City and Perth SC and had an outstanding season for Perth in 2010 after recovering from a knee reconstruction the previous season. It comes as no surprise to learn that O'Dell has imported a couple of former Hull City players in Tom Matthews, a right back, and striker James McGarry.

Matthews, 23, has also had spells at Halifax Town and Boston United while McGarry and Wallace have been playing for NCEL Premier Division side Bridlington Town

during the current UK season. Wide midfielder Steve Downie has also been brought out from the UK. Downie has been on the books of York and Bradford and is likely to play on the right-hand side.

Senior squad members that survived O'Dell's off-season cull include custodian Peter Gavalas, who will captain the side this year, Adam Fadljevic, George Stavridis, Jack Webster, Craig Smart and youngster Billy Liolios.

There's a chance that O'Dell could pounce on an A-League teenager after recently losing out on an English import but he was tight-lipped when asked to name the possible target.

He was much more forthcoming when asked which teams loom as the toughest to beat this season.

"Green Gully and Hellas, mate. They're definitely the teams to beat. We played Hellas in the Greek Cup recently and although I had five



Wayne Wallace Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

lads out to be honest the only time we got near the ball was during the warm-up.

"They beat us 2-0 and to tell you the truth they beat us convincingly. "But don't worry about us, mate. We'll be alright. I'm a big believer in getting players fit and we'll be fit. We'll be organised too. Don't you worry about that."

O'Dell isn't saying much about the club's main aim this season other than retaining its VPL spot but I suspect he'll be looking at much more than that.

His ultra-competitive nature can border on combative and he'll leave his players in no doubt about what is expected of them.

There's not much talk around the traps of Bentleigh's finals chances in 2011 but this is a much more physically imposing squad than last year and one that could well prove tough to toss.

Dismiss the Greens at your peril.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1975
Ground address: Churchill Reserve, Fox St. St Albans
VPL Championships: Nil
President: Danny Jutrisa
Coach: Kruti Razov
Assistant Coach: Joe Kovacevic
Football Operations Manager: Mark Ivkovic
Captain: Maks Cuze
Finished last season: 1st in State League One
Top Scorer in 2010: Goran Jozeljic (10 goals)
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: N/A

Table with 2 columns: Squad List 2011, GK, D, M, F. Includes players like Steven Pavlovic, Stefan Jesensek, Maks Cuze, etc.

Saints March In The Big Time

By Michal Skrodski

The 2011 VPL Season will welcome back St. Albans Saints after a 5 year absence in State League One.

The Saints are glad to be back, where they feel they belong, after all from 1984 to 2005 the club played in the Victorian top flight. Despite such a long time in the top flight the boys from Churchill Reserve never managed to break through for that illusive VPL title, the closest they came was in 1998 when they finished Minor Premiers but failed to Bulleen Inter Kings in the Grand Final, losing 2-3.

St. Albans are the 2010 State One Champions after they dramatically won the title on the last day of the season. The Saints and arch rivals Springvale White Eagles were battling it out at the end of the season for State 1 honours and it came down to the last day of the State 1 season. Springvale White Eagles had to just secure a draw at home to Bulleen Lions to win the title while nothing less than 3 points for St Albans would do at home to Malvern City. The Saints did the job 6-1 and wild scenes of pride and passion at Churchill Reserve were sparked when the news came through the White Eagles had been defeated 4-5 in dramatic fashion meaning the Saints were champions by goal difference. The Saints were also docked 3 points during the 2010 season making their title even more amazing. Docked points is something St. Albans is all too familiar with, as the Saints will also feel the State 1 Champion-



Top stuff! The Saints have a reputation of giving the shirts off their back for the cause, and won't be deterred by the expectations of what the VPL brings after clinching the SL1 championship last season. Photos: STEVE STAREK



Josip Loncaric will be sure to roar for the Saints again this season.

ship came one year overdue as they should have been 2009 champions. They were denied the championship and promotion after a farcical 9 point deduction from the FFV, but all that seems to be long forgotten after a successful 2010, let's hope there will be no petty deduction of points this season not only for the Saints but for every team under the FFV banner.

For the 2011 season St. Albans had kept the core of their 2010 State 1 squad with some very handy additions with VPL, A-League and even European experience.

The Saints have picked up a few quality signing, from their sister club Melbourne Knights: Liam Cannell, Dario Lasic, Michael Grgic and Ante Loncaric, Daniel Visevic and Stefan Piorkowski from

Richmond and from New Zealand team AFC Tawa Wellington the Saints have picked up Louis Fenton.

The stand out signing probably has to be Daniel Visevic, the striker is coming from Richmond but has had experience at Croatian giants Dinamo Zagreb. Visevic will be looking to get his name at the top of the scorers list and his pre-season form is looking ominous for rival clubs.

One player returning to Churchill Reserve is the other signing from Richmond, defender Tomislav Mildardovic. Mildardovic will be looking return to the form that saw him picked up by A-League outfit Adelaide United for a short-term loan back in 2007 and he will be a tough player to get around at the back for

the Saints.

The word from St. Albans is one of cautious optimism, with the goal first and foremost to stay up and keep the Saints in the VPL. Although, with a quality squad the Saints have, a finals place is not completely out of the question but Football Operations Manager Mark Ivkovic realises the reality and difficulty of the season ahead:

"Our main priority is to survive. We know what we're capable of and if we have a good run with injuries and suspension we could possibly sneak into the top 5. But our main focus is to stay up and make sure that we remain in the VPL and put this club back on the map, where it belongs." Ivkovic also noted the good preparation done by the club as thinks that: "We've recruited

some excellent players and a lot of hard work has gone into preparing the squad as best we can for the season and we hope that it will pay off in the end." So far signs are good at the Saints, they have been competitive in all their pre-season friendlies with the highlight being a 5-0 thumping of Richmond at Kevin Bartlett Reserve. Although, as any football fan will tell you, you can only read so much from a pre-season match.

A big season awaits the Saints but win, lose or draw one thing is for sure: St. Albans Saints will be able to count on their boisterous and passionate support from their fans which has made playing at Churchill Reserve an intimidating place to visit for any opposition.



FAST FACTS

Year club formed: 1975
Ground Address: White Eagles Stadium, 310 - 322 Perry Road, Keysborough.
Mel: 94 - G7
VPL Championships: 0
President: Bozo Stojanac
Coach: Zlatko Mihajlovic
Assistant Coaches: Sinisha Cohadzic & Perica Veljovic
Captain: Tome Racunica
Finished last Season: Second in State League One (promoted to VPL for the third time in history of the Club - 1997, 2007, 2011)
Top Scorer in 2010: Nenad Pavasovic 10 goals
Most Gold Medal Votes 2010: N/A

Table with 2 columns: Squad List 2011, GK, D, M, F, S. Includes players like Scott Augustin, Christoan Morales, Stevan Preradovic, etc.

By Milan Ninovic

AFTER a long and gruelling pre-season schedule the Springvale White Eagles are now looking forward to the start of the season knowing a great challenge lies ahead in the Alanic Victorian Premier League.

Senior coach Zed Mihajlovic and his assistant Sinisa Cohadzic have managed to assemble a young, competitive and hungry squad that are eager to prove their worth in the VPL. Needless to say, the season will throw many challenges at the coaches and players, but the commitment and endeavour shown thus far during pre-season suggests the White Eagles have the ability to overcome these challenges, and prove to be a competitive force.

As was the goal of most other teams that have come up from Division One over the years, this first year is all about survival, and building a platform for years to come, and the White Eagles are pleased to announce that the core group of players that achieved promotion to the VPL have all agreed to stay on.

With the return of former players Goran Zoric (Police United - Thailand), Milos Lujic (Richmond), Dejan Radojicic (Altona Magic), Boris Bajic (Noble Park), and new signings Christian Morales (Heidelberg), Scott Augustin (Oakleigh), Adam Ewin (Berwick City) & Andrew Jerez (Malvern City), the coaching staff are encouraged by the early signs of



Newly promoted Springvale White Eagles are back in the big time after a four year absence and with former NSL player Zed Mihajlovic at the helm won't be overwhelmed by the task in front of them. Photo: MILAN NINOVIC

progress this young and talented group have exhibited so far, and with a healthy team spirit in place have shown signs they will give their all to get the White Eagles back on the map in the VPL.

With Zed Mihajlovic at the helm, the former NSL player who had stints at Gippsland Falcons and Marconi, has already shown he has the nous and experience to build and mould an outfit that has the capabilities to surprise a few of the heavyweights along the way. "I'm happy with the results we've achieved so far but we haven't actually gathered any points for those games, so we have to be realistic with what our objectives are for this season. First and foremost we aim to consolidate our position in the league and we just

have to take it one game at a time and evaluate our performances after each game. We're excited with the challenge that awaits ahead of us, but realistically we're a small squad compared to some of the other clubs that have gone out and invested heavily a few days before the deadline. It just goes to show what the reality is, but it's also a great motivation for us to go out and show people who we are, because they basically don't know who we are."

"It will be a great test for us as coaches and as players. Realistically we are a small fish in this league, but that won't stop us from thinking big. We've got a close unit and the rewards of a strong pre-season means that we've got some good confidence at the mo-

ment.

"We've got a reasonably young squad and it will be a good eye-opener for the club to see where we're at in the whole scheme of things.

Having said that, we actually play our first game before anyone else, against the NTC, so with all respect if we get a result on Tuesday night we may even be out of the blocks nice and early and even sitting on top of the ladder before the weekend!"

What they may lack in competitive and individual experience at this level, they make up for with an attacking and technical brand of football that has raised quite a few eyebrows over the summer with some great pre-season results.

No doubt it will be a massive task for the club to stay in this league as they have stuck to a very limited budget, but the coaches and players are far happier this way trying to prove that it's not all about signing "big names" to be successful. As the coaches said "trying to coach and spending precious time to develop talent from your own backyard over the pre-season gives you more satisfaction and pride as a coach than it does in making last minute signings".

White Eagles pre-season results were as follows: SWE 1-1 Hume City, SWE 2-1 South Melbourne, SWE 3-0 Richmond, SWE 4-1 Oakleigh Cannons, SWE 2-2 Green Gully, Heidelberg United 1-6 SWE & SWE 4-0 Whittlesea Stallions.

The White Eagles have shown some good form in the lead up to the 2011 season, but the coaching staff are well aware that these games don't get you any points, and only from Round 1 is when the players will need to earn their respect to survive in this league. One recalls the famous quip by Alan Hansen when he said "you don't win anything with kids", before Alex Ferguson's Manchester United swept all before it and conquered England and Europe with David Beckham and co.

Who's to stop this squad from scaling the heights of the AVPL and turning itself from a David into a Goliath?

Round 1

Tue 15 Feb 8:15PM **N.T.C v Springvale White Eagles** *White Eagles Stadium*
Fri 18 Feb 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Northcote City** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Sun 20 Feb 3:00PM **Richmond Eagles v Heidelberg Utd** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sun 20 Feb 5:00PM **South Melbourne v Green Gully Cavaliers** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 20 Feb 5:00PM **St Albans Saints v Hume City** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 20 Feb 6:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Dandenong Thunder** *Knights Stadium*
Sun 20 Feb 7:00PM **Bentleigh Greens v Springvale White Eagles** *Kingston Heath*

Round 2

Wed 23 Feb 8:30PM **N.T.C v Bentleigh Greens**
Fri 25 Feb 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Fri 25 Feb 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v South Melbourne** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sat 26 Feb 5:00PM **Northcote City v Melbourne Knights** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 26 Feb 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v St Albans Saints** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 27 Feb 3:00PM **Hume City v Richmond Eagles** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 27 Feb 6:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Bentleigh Greens** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 3

Wed 2 Mar 8:30PM **South Melbourne v N.T.C**
Fri 4 Mar 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Springvale White Eagles** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Fri 4 Mar 8:30PM **Melbourne Knights v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Knights Stadium*
Fri 4 Mar 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Dandenong Thunder** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sun 6 Mar 3:00PM **Hume City v Heidelberg Utd** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 6 Mar 5:00PM **South Melbourne v Bentleigh Greens** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 6 Mar 5:00PM **St Albans Saints v Northcote City** *Churchill Reserve*

Round 4

Mon 7 Mar 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v N.T.C** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Fri 11 Mar 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Oakleigh Cannons** *Kingston Heath*
Sat 12 Mar 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v St Albans Saints** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 12 Mar 5:00PM **Northcote City v Richmond Eagles** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 12 Mar 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Hume City** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 13 Mar 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v Melbourne Knights** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 13 Mar 6:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v South Melbourne** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 5

Wed 16 Mar 8:30PM **Melbourne Knights v N.T.C**
Fri 18 Mar 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v South Melbourne** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Fri 18 Mar 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 19 Mar 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Heidelberg Utd** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 20 Mar 3:00PM **Hume City v Northcote City** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 20 Mar 5:00PM **St Albans Saints v Springvale White Eagles** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 20 Mar 6:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Bentleigh Greens** *Knights Stadium*

Round 6

Wed 23 Mar 8:30PM **N.T.C v Hume City**
Fri 25 Mar 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v St Albans Saints** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 25 Mar 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v Richmond Eagles** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sat 26 Mar 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Hume City** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 26 Mar 5:00PM **Northcote City v Dandenong Thunder** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 27 Mar 5:00PM **South Melbourne v Melbourne Knights** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 27 Mar 6:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Oakleigh Cannons** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 7

Wed 30 Mar 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v N.T.C**
Fri 1 Apr 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Bentleigh Greens** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 2 Apr 3:00PM **Northcote City v Heidelberg Utd** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 2 Apr 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Green Gully Cavaliers** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 3 Apr 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v South Melbourne** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 3 Apr 3:00PM **Hume City v Springvale White Eagles** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 3 Apr 6:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Oakleigh Cannons** *Knights Stadium*

Round 8

Fri 8 Apr 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Hume City** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 8 Apr 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v St Albans Saints** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Sat 9 Apr 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Northcote City** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sun 10 Apr 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v Dandenong Thunder** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 10 Apr 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Richmond Eagles** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 10 Apr 6:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Melbourne Knights** *Olympic Park (Village)*
Tues 12 Jun 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v N.T.C** *Churchill Reserve*

Round 9

Wed 13 Apr 8:30PM **N.T.C v Dandenong Thunder**
Fri 15 Apr 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Oakleigh Cannons** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 16 Apr 3:00PM **Northcote City v Springvale White Eagles** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 16 Apr 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Heidelberg Utd** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 16 Apr 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Bentleigh Greens** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 17 Apr 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Melbourne Knights** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 17 Apr 3:00PM **Hume City v South Melbourne** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*

Round 10

Wed 27 Apr 8:30PM **Northcote City v N.T.C**
Fri 29 Apr 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Northcote City** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 29 Apr 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v Green Gully Cavaliers** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 1 May 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Heidelberg Utd** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 1 May 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Dandenong Thunder** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 1 May 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Richmond Eagles** *Knights Stadium*
Mon 2 May 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Hume City** *Jack Edwards Reserve*

Round 11

Wed 4 May 8:30PM **N.T.C v Green Gully Cavaliers**
Fri 6 May 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v St Albans Saints** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 7 May 3:00PM **Northcote City v South Melbourne** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 7 May 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Bentleigh Greens** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 7 May 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Oakleigh Cannons** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 8 May 3:00PM **Hume City v Melbourne Knights** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 8 May 6:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Springvale White Eagles** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 12

Wed 11 May 8:30PM **Heidelberg Utd v N.T.C**
Fri 13 May 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v Bentleigh Greens** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sat 14 May 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v South Melbourne** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 14 May 3:00PM **Northcote City v Oakleigh Cannons** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 14 May 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Melbourne Knights** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 15 May 3:00PM **Hume City v St Albans Saints** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 15 May 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Richmond Eagles** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 13

Wed 18 May 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v N.T.C** *White Eagles Stadium*
Fri 20 May 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Heidelberg Utd** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 20 May 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Hume City** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 21 May 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Oakleigh Cannons** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sun 22 May 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Dandenong Thunder** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 22 May 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Northcote City** *Knights Stadium*
Sun 22 May 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Springvale White Eagles** *John Cain Memorial*

Round 14

Tues 24 May 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v N.T.C** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 27 May 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v South Melbourne** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 27 May 8:30PM **Springvale White Eagles v Oakleigh Cannons** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sat 28 May 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Melbourne Knights** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 28 May 3:00PM **Northcote City v St Albans Saints** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 28 May 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Richmond Eagles** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 29 May 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Hume City** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 15

Wed 1 Jun 8:30PM **N.T.C v South Melbourne**
Fri 3 Jun 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Northcote City** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sun 5 Jun 3:00PM **Hume City v Dandenong Thunder** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 5 Jun 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 5 Jun 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Heidelberg Utd** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 5 Jun 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Springvale White Eagles** *Knights Stadium*
Wed 8 Jun 8:30PM **N.T.C v Oakleigh Cannons** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Mon 13 Jun 4:00PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Bentleigh Greens** *Jack Edwards Reserve*

Round 16

Tues 14 Jun 8:30PM **N.T.C v Melbourne Knights** *Knights Stadium*
Fri 17 Jun 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Melbourne Knights** *Kingston Heath*
Sat 18 Jun 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Richmond Eagles** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 18 Jun 3:00PM **Northcote City v Hume City** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 19 Jun 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Oakleigh Cannons** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 19 Jun 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v St Albans Saints** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 19 Jun 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Dandenong Thunder** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 17

Wed 22 Jun 8:30PM **St Albans Saints v N.T.C**
Fri 24 Jun 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Heidelberg Utd** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Fri 24 Jun 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Springvale White Eagles** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 25 Jun 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Northcote City** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 26 Jun 3:00PM **Hume City v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 26 Jun 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Bentleigh Greens** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 26 Jun 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne** *Knights Stadium*

Round 18

Wed 29 Jun 8:30PM **N.T.C v Richmond Eagles**
Fri 1 Jul 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Richmond Eagles** *Kingston Heath*
Fri 1 Jul 8:30PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Melbourne Knights** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Sat 2 Jul 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v Dandenong Thunder** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sun 3 Jul 3:00PM **South Melbourne v St Albans Saints** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 3 Jul 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v Hume City** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 3 Jul 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Northcote City** *Olympic Park (Village)*

Round 19

Wed 6 Jul 8:30PM **N.T.C v Hume City**
Fri 8 Jul 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v South Melbourne** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 9 Jul 3:00PM **Northcote City v Green Gully Cavaliers** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 9 Jul 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v Springvale White Eagles** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 10 Jul 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Heidelberg Utd** *Knights Stadium*
Sun 10 Jul 3:00PM **Hume City v Bentleigh Greens** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*
Sun 10 Jul 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Oakleigh Cannons** *Churchill Reserve*

Round 20

Wed 13 Jul 8:30PM **Dandenong Thunder v N.T.C**
Fri 15 Jul 8:15PM **Bentleigh Greens v Dandenong Thunder** *Kingston Heath*
Sun 17 Jul 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v St Albans Saints** *Knights Stadium*
Sun 17 Jul 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Hume City** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 17 Jul 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v Northcote City** *White Eagles Stadium*
Sun 17 Jul 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Olympic Park (Village)*
Sun 17 Jul 6:00PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Richmond Eagles** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Wed 20 Jul 8:30PM **N.T.C v Northcote City**


Round 21

Wed 27 Jul 8:30PM **Green Gully Cavaliers v N.T.C**
Fri 29 Jul 8:30PM **Richmond Eagles v Melbourne Knights** *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Sat 30 Jul 3:00PM **Green Gully Cavalier v Springvale White Eagles** *Green Gully Reserve*
Sat 30 Jul 3:00PM **Northcote City v Bentleigh Greens** *John Cain Memorial*
Sat 30 Jul 7:00PM **Dandenong Thunder v South Melbourne** *George Andrews Reserve*
Sun 31 Jul 3:00PM **Heidelberg Utd v St Albans Saints** *Olympic Park (Village)*
Sun 31 Jul 3:00PM **Hume City v Oakleigh Cannons** *Broadmeadows Valley Park*

Round 22

Wed 3 Aug 8:30PM **N.T.C v Heidelberg Utd**
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **St Albans Saints v Richmond Eagles** *Churchill Reserve*
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **Melbourne Knights v Hume City** *Knights Stadium*
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **Oakleigh Cannons v Dandenong Thunder** *Jack Edwards Reserve*
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **South Melbourne v Northcote City** *John Cain Memorial*
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **Bentleigh Greens v Green Gully Cavaliers** *Kingston Heath*
Sun 7 Aug 3:00PM **Springvale White Eagles v Heidelberg Utd** *White Eagles Stadium*






V-LEAGUE

PREMIERSHIP

Round 14

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Pascoe Vale FC Makes It Lucky Thirteen!

By Adam Husseini

CF Brunswick v Pascoe Vale FC

CF Brunswick played well against an unstoppable Pascoe Vale FC machine but fell well short of defeating the title favorites.

3 goals to young gun R. Ferguson and another 3 to E.Simsek was enough to secure all 3 points and make it 13 out of 13 for the black and Whites.

Under construction and with the new administration settling in it was a much improved performance from CF Brunswick who is lingering in 10th spot. With eight premierships games remaining it's going to be a battle in the relegation zone

Pascoe Vale FC 8 CF Brunswick 2

CF Brunswick goals: M. Nyadzayo, C. Cicekdag **Yellow Card:** A. Stazio **C.Ceekdag Red Card:** C.Ceekdag
Pascoe Vale FC goals: R. Ferguson 3, E. Simsek 3, M. Barbosa Jnr, J. Da Silva

Brimbank FC v FC Collingwood

Brimbank FC defeated FC Collingwood in a good old fashion bottom of the table clash and sent them to the cellar of the premierships Ladder.

It was FC Collingwood who started brighter with attack after attack only to be denied time after time by BFC's no. 1 Carlos Munos. Brimbank FC recruited well with Jason Barrientos transferring from NMFC and Gastavo Candelo.

Brimbank FC 4 FC Collingwood 1

FC Collingwood goal: (A.Ameti BFC own goal) **Yellow Card:** J. Cheong
Brimbank FC goals: J. Barrientos, N. Kalkan, A. Kablar (C.Zabel FCC own goal)

Metropolitan FC v Hume FC

Metropolitan FC keep their title hopes alive with a hard fought win over mid table battlers Hume FC, the sky blues MFC raced to a 4 goal buffer deep into the 2nd half and never looked like stopping.

Enter Resit Culculoglu Hume's no. 1 defensive utility that battled and harassed and got his team within a goal. The experience of Metropolitan hung on and run out eventual winners.

Metropolitan FC 9 Hume FC 8

Hume FC goals: M. Dixon 3, R. Culculoglu, M. Tankir, M. Parlak, N. Sahin, M. Nabir **Yellow Card:** M. Tankir, M. Parlak
Metropolitan FC goals: A. Redzepovic 3, D. Redzepovic 2, j. Kovic, H. Ikanovic, I. Zilic, T. Grgic



Ashburton's James Sorensen (GK) and Victor Mostquita are keeping the pressure on the undefeated Pascoe Vale FC



Black & White machine Pascoe Vale FC make it 13 out of 13 easily accounting for CF Brunswick

Ashburton FC v FC Essendon

Leading all match, FC Essendon ran out of legs as the samba kings Ashburton secure their 10th win of the season coming from behind and defeating old foes and out of form FC Essendon. Mauricio Novak, Victor Mosquita and Henry Fernandez all kicking doubles and kept the pressure on PVFC. FC Essendon are heading closer and closer to the relegation playoffs and Manager Zoran Matic will do whatever he can to avoid another end of season battle.

Ashburton FC 7 FC Essendon 3

FC Essendon goals: A. Pavlovic 2, Igor Stevanovic **Yellow Card:** Igor Stevanovic
Ashburton FC goals: M. Novak 2, V. Mostquita 2, H. Fernandez 2, Herbert **Yellow Card:** J. Sorensen

Fitzroy FC v Mickleham FC

The Champions Fitzroy FC makes it 2 in arrow def Mickleham FC in a ripper. Rasoulzadeh Snr's men came from behind twice with Captain Hassanikhoo kicking an inspirational hat trick. Mickleham FC without the boss's son Dusian Bosnjak rallied but just fell short from getting a result. A close and knitty affair with both defenses doing their job. A welcome return to, Anthony Colosimo and Ryan Filipovic who scored a goal a piece, James Kalafitidis with the other.

Fitzroy FC 4 Mickleham FC 3

Mickleham FC goals: A. Colosimo, R. Filipovic, J. Kalafitidis
Fitzroy FC goals: H. Hassanikhoo 3, (M. Nguyen MFC own goal) **Yellow Card:** H. Hassanikhoo, A. Hasikiri



Sssshhh! Ben Armstrong FC Prahran kicks the winner against old rivals Nth Melbourne FC and lets everyone know about it.



Alija Redzepovic Metropolitan FC (Sky Blues) started off as favourites but slipped down to 4th

FC Prahran v Nth Melbourne FC

Massive upset was on the cards as FC Prahran def Nth Melbourne FC in an action packed match. An unlikely hero stepped up in the form of little Ben Armstrong kicking the winner in the dying minutes to send FC Prahran on a frenzy.

Nth Melbourne FC went down 5-0 with Dimi Vithoulkas on fire for Prahran, 2 yellow cards saw Vithoulkas see red and it was over to the Nth Melbourne boys who played brilliantly led well by Manager M. Sakkos to get to 5 - 5. FC Prahran held on and record their 5th win of the season and move to 8th spot, 1 spot above the relegation playoffs.

FC Prahran 6 Nth Melb FC 5

Nth Melbourne FC goals: Jonathan Barrientos 2, A. Cooper, M. Pedic, C. Waterfield
FC Prahran goals: B. Armstrong 2, D. Vithoulkas 2, A. Muktar, M. Avram **Yellow Card:** D. Vithoulkas, C. Mogaai. **Red Card:** D. Vithoulkas

V-League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Pascoe Vale FC	13	13	0	0	117	39	78	39
2 Ashburton FC	14	10	1	3	95	72	23	31
3 Nth Melbourne FC	13	10	0	3	71	43	28	30
4 Metropolitan FC	14	9	1	4	111	63	48	28
5 Hume FC	14	6	2	6	65	67	-2	20
6 FC Essendon	14	6	2	6	81	90	-9	20
7 Fitzroy FC	14	6	1	7	70	88	-18	19
8 FC Prahran	14	5	0	9	65	90	-25	15
9 Mickleham FC	14	4	2	8	82	80	2	14
10 CF Brunswick	14	4	0	10	61	97	-36	12

Round 14 Results Wed Feb 9th

•6:30 Pascoe Vale FC v CF Brunswick 8 - 2
•7:15 Brimbank FC v FC Collingwood 4 - 1
•8:00 Metropolitan FC v Hume FC 9 - 8
•8:45 Ashburton FC v FC Essendon 7 - 3
•9:30 Mickleham FC v Fitzroy FC 3 - 4
•10:15 Nth Melbourne FC v FC Prahran 5 - 6

Round 15 Clashes Wed Feb 16th

•6:30 Pascoe Vale FC v FC Collingwood
•7:15 Brimbank FC v FC Prahran
•8:00 Ashburton FC v Fitzroy FC
•8:45 Mickleham FC v Metropolitan FC
•9:30 Nth Melbourne FC v Hume FC
•10:15 CF Brunswick v FC Essendon

Souvlaki Hut State League Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 FC Melbourne	12	11	0	1	63	33	30	33
2 FC Balwyn	11	8	1	2	87	46	41	25
3 FC Footscray	12	8	1	3	79	47	32	25
4 Elsternwick FC	11	7	1	3	66	49	17	22
5 Albert Park FC	12	5	1	7	66	76	-10	15
6 Melb Uni FC	12	5	0	7	53	78	-25	15
7 FC Carlton	12	4	1	7	71	70	1	13
8 Melb Uni FC	11	4	0	7	45	73	-28	12

State League Championship Season Round 12 Sun Feb 6

•7:40 FC Melbourne v FC Geelong 5 - 3
•8:20 FC Balwyn v FC Footscray 5 - 4
•9:00 Melb Uni FC v Doncaster FC 8 - 5
•9:40 Bentleigh FC v Elsternwick FC 9 - 1
•10:20 Albert Park FC v FC Carlton 8 - 4

State League Championship Season Round 13 Sun Feb 13

•7:40 FC Balwyn v FC Melbourne
•8:20 Albert Park FC v FC Geelong
•9:00 Melb Uni FC v Elsternwick FC
•9:40 Doncaster FC v FC Carlton
•10:20 Bentleigh FC v FC Footscray

State Top Scorers

•Rob Zadworny FCB	30 goals
•Samim Mehrjerdi FCC	27 goals
•Matt Italiano FCB	25 goals
•Peter Kratki EFC	22 goals

PHOTOS BY
Theo Soufis & Sam Soufis

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Japan Ends Socceroos' Asian Dream

By Simon Saleh

THE Asian Cup...we were so close to winning it but alas Australia was undone by Murphy's Law after failing to convert their opportunities as they dominated the final.

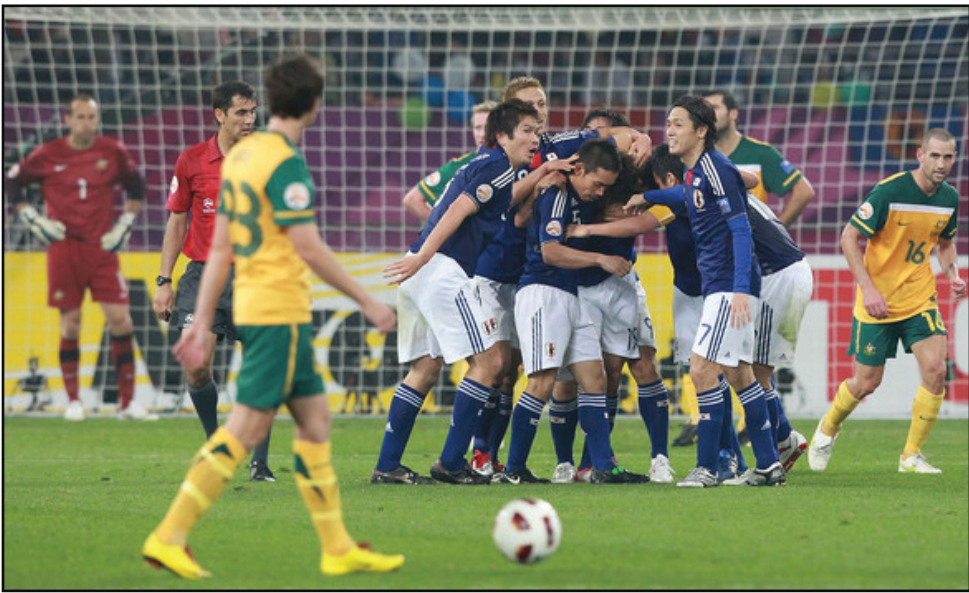
The road there in itself was enlightening as Australia produced a sumptuous display against Uzbekistan which should be recognised as a watermark moment in Socceroos history as the Aussies played with ambition and aplomb to mop the floor with the Uzbeks.

The selection of the Socceroos squad was the start of encouraging signs as a mix of stalwarts in Cahill, Kewell, Schwarzer and Neil were mixed with the new shining lights of the Southern Cross in the likes of Holman, Jedinak and Ognenovski. Even more crucial to the squad was the addition of domestic stars McKay and Kruse who did a brilliant job of making Verbeek look like the tool that he is after his consistent dismissals of the A League product.

Australia's first game was against our more traditional cricketing foes India. I could swear I heard on some telecast before the game that Australia was thrashed 7-0 against India in the distant past. I can only assume the Indians took their

cricket bats onto the field with them for that encounter to run up such a ridiculous score against us. Alas history did not repeat itself as Australia produced a par score against a team ranked so far into the horizon that not even the brightest of red dots could be spotted from such a distance.

With that game out of the way in an acceptable fashion, the Socceroos moved onto the crunch round robin game against Asian heavy weights South Ko-



Tandari Lee #19 of Japan celebrates his goal in extra time during the AFC Asian Cup Final match between the Australian Socceroos and Japan at Khalifa International Stadium on January 29, 2011 in Doha, Qatar.

rea. What was particularly noticeable about the match was the argy bargy that was let go, that gave the impression that a lot of the refs in that tournament had a fondness for more full contact body sports such as UFC. How Timmy didn't get a couple of spot kicks for being constantly bundled over in the box attempting headers, I don't know. Mile Jedinak used the force lateishly in the second half to help Australia salvage a 1-1 draw in the end

after the Koreans capitalised on a chance in the first half.

With our last game against Bahrain, Australia was still an outside chance of not even progressing to the knock out stage but a draw would have sufficed to make it to finals footy. Jedinak produced a stunning long range effort in the 37th minute to bring his goal tally in the tournament to two out of two games. Mark Schwarzer was brilliant to constantly deny Bahrain in the

second half as they pressed hard to try and sneak into the finals at the Socceroos expense. In the end it finished 1-0 and with South Korea only producing a 4-1 result against India, it meant Australia finished top of the group on goal difference and that Australia would now face Iraq in the quarter finals.

This meant that ugly déjà vu was potentially on the menu after Australia's elimination from the last Asian Cup at the hands of Iraq. Australia had a couple of chances to take the lead just before half time as chances fell to McKay and Kewell, but at half time it was all zipperoooney, as an imperious performance by Captain Neil kept the Iraqi's at bay. 10 minutes into the second half saw Iraq's best chance of the match but they fluffed it. At full time it was deadlocked as the Aussies missed a couple more guilt edged chances before we went into extra time, and didn't it look like we were going to get to the end of that as well, until the masterful Kewell headed Australia into a semi final spot with a sublime header that ended a thrilling clash, and Kewell's reputation as a complete groin. As I previously mentioned Australia v Uzbekistan is one of the Socceroos greatest moments as we completely dismantled a credible and rising Asian force

in the semi finals with some inspired possession play. The best thing about the game was to see the Uzbek coach so utterly distraught after his pre match comments that the Socceroos had been going backwards in recent times. He went on to say that the Uzbeks weren't playing Brazil so there was no real need to worry. Didn't he end up looking as big a tool as Verbeek. We won that one 6-0 by the way to set up a showdown against Japan in the final.

Two lessons should have been learnt in that final. Do not play for the penalty all the time (Tim-but I can understand his frustration). Do not be guilty of ball watching (David-but I can understand his fatigue). Otherwise I have rarely been filled with so much pride in the green and gold.

So Close, Yet So Far	
Quarterfinals	
JAPAN 3 - 2 QATAR	
UZBEKISTAN 2 - 1 JORDAN	
AUSTRALIA 1 - 0 IRAQ (aet)	
I.R. IRAN 0 - 1 KOREA REP. (aet)	
Semifinals	
JAPAN 2 - 2 KOREA (aet)	
Japan wins 3-0 on penalties	
AUSTRALIA 6 - 0 UZBEKISTAN	
Final	
Australia 0 - 1 Japan	

Aussies Abroad - January

Asia Cup Takes Centre Stage

By Damien Davies

WHILE the Asian Cup dominated our thoughts during January, still plenty of Aussies appearing across Europe. The opening of the transfer window saw plenty of movement with loan moves and transfers to Asia plentiful. Around half the European leagues are back in action after the winter break and weather delays, while the bigger leagues in Asia are still a month away from resuming.

Club Level

Majority of the Aussies in the English Premier League spent the month at the Asian Cup. Everton (Cahill) and Blackpool (Carney) both dropped a few places on the tables in their absence. Countering that, David Stockdale deputised for Mark Schwarzer as Fulham pulled clear of the relegation zone. At Blackburn, Brett Emerton's absence hasn't stopped the team moving into the top half of the table. Chris Herd continues to get some minutes from the bench as Villa moved closer to safety. Brad Jones will be pleased to see that Liverpool are back fighting for a place in Europe after a poor start to the season. In the Championship, Neil Kilkenny's team mates at Leeds have down the right thing and kept the team in a playoff position. Perhaps controversially, Adam Federici didn't go to Qatar but justified his stance to stay at Reading as they

continued their push up the table. Scott McDonald's Middlesbrough went undefeated in the Championship in January but still need more points to avoid a relegation fight. Hull City have consolidated a mid table position as Richie Garcia recovers from injury. Shane Lowry has joined Sheffield United on loan, however the team face an uphill battle to avoid relegation. Sure to be an interesting few months for our Aussies playing in League Two. Chesterfield (Aaron Downes) should get automatic promotion from their current strong position, while Shrewsbury Town (Shane Cansdell-Sheriff) are currently in a playoff position. Accrington Stanley (Alex Cisak) and Aldershot (Jamie Young) are both mid table but have time to make late runs up the table. Barnet (Daniel Leach) will be fighting relegation rather than striving for promotion. James Meredith continues his great run of game time at York City, but they are not looking like pushing up to league football. There are several Aussies coming through the ranks at Hearts in Scotland, notably Ryan McGowan, as they consolidated their position at third after beating Rangers one week and then losing to Celtic the following. Across to Italy and Lazio are just holding on to third position with Bresciano seeing slightly more minutes but still not starting. In Serie B, an improved month on the pitch by Portosum-

maga (Madaschi) but they are still in relegation danger along with Carl Valeri's Sassuolo. The Aussies that appear frequently in Holland (Holman and Oar) were at the Asian Cup however both their clubs both remain in line for spots in European competitions next season. James Holland has dropped a level to see regular game time, scoring in the first ten minutes of his debut appearance at Sparta Rotterdam. Nikita Rukavysya played a large part in a great month for Hertha as they earned maximum points and returned to the top of the 2. Bundesliga. Dario Vidosic has gone on loan to Arminia Bielefeld in the same league. He is now starting each fixture, however his new team are rooted to the bottom of the table. Turkey also saw most of our Aussies in the Asian Cup squad, with the league not resuming until late January. Both AEK (Burns) and Kavala (Giannou) remain in the European spots, with Giannou seeing good minutes from the bench during the month. Second tier in Greece, and Billy Konstaninidis is also getting game time at his new club, Pierikos. Finally in Asia, Tolgey Ozbey has now scored nine goals in two months as East Bengal lead the league in India. The only other Asian league to note this month is the new rebel league in Indonesia. A total of eight Aussies appeared during January, too early in the season to discuss standings.

There were no Champions League fixtures in either Europe or Asia during January, along with UEFA Europa League.

Youth

Firstly looking at players eligible for the U20 World Cup. Worth noting the number of Aussies at the academy at Portsmouth. Most fixtures have four or five Aussies on the pitch, certainly a breeding ground to watch closely. Matthew Fletcher, Kearyn Baccus, Bradden Inman and Bailey Wright continue to appear for their respective reserves teams. Dylan McGowan is starting in the seniors each week at East Fife, which has seen his loan deal extended.

Injuries

Unfortunately the injury list is not getting much shorter with Rhys Williams (groin), Patrick Kisnorbo (achilles), James Troisi (knee) and Richie Garcia (knee) all on the sidelines. Vince Grella (groin) returned to the Blackburn side after several months out. Several players appearing in Japan are currently injured, but hopefully the off-season sees them recover.

National level

The Asian Cup performance by the Socceroos was very positive. Not only did we win the games that we were expected to win, but we also gave valuable experience to some of the lesser known players at national level such as McKay, Ognenovski, Kilkenny and Kruse. We saw Lucas Neill and Mark Schwarzer produce the dependability that we have seen on many occasions in the past, and then we saw Harry Kewell turn back the clock a little and produce some fantastic moments during the tournament. We played a fantastic final, and the heroics of the Japanese keeper probably stood between Australia and silverware. Certainly many reasons

to be proud and excited about the future. The Socceroos are back in action in March, playing a friendly against Germany with the promise of some new blood. Just like the naming of a 50 man squad for the Asian Cup, will be intriguing to see who gets the call up. We now have a few months before the Matildas grace the world stage, closely followed by the U20 World Cup in Colombia.

Transfers

The transfer window was open during January, hence a little more movement that previous months although not of our current Socceroos. Several of our younger players have made great loan moves with the hope of playing senior football in the lead up to the U20 World Cup. The number of Aussies moving to Indonesia continues to grow and several key defenders from the HAL are moving to Korea for the upcoming season. The off-season venture to Fiji for the O-League is now over with our NSWPL players returning for pre-season with their clubs.

Additions/changes to database:

Jason Davidson (29 Jun 1991) - loan to Sporting da Covilha, Portugal

Luke DeVere (5 Nov 1989) - transferred to Gyeongnam FC, Korea

Ryan Gazet du Chattelier (17 Feb 1991) - transferred to Stuttgarter Kickers, Germany

Iain Fyfe (3 Apr 1982) - transferred to Busan I'Park, Korea

Scott Gannon (12 Mar 1988) - transferred to Hawkes Bay, New Zealand

James Holland (15 May 1989) - loan to Sparta Rotterdam, Netherlands

Andrija Jukic (3 Jan 1987) - transferred to Bogor Raya FC, Indonesia

Tomi Juric (22 Jul 1991) - transferred to NK Croatia Sesvete, Croatia

Jerry Karpeh (16 Jun 1984) - transferred to Churchill Brothers, India

Shane Lowry (12 Jun 1989) - loan to Sheffield United, England

Massimo Luongo (25 Sep 1992) - transferred to Tottenham, England

Josh Maguire (22 Sep 1980) - transferred to Semarang United, Indonesia

David Micevski (25 Feb 1986) - transferred to Solo FC, Indonesia

Pasquale Polistina (18 Jan 1989) - loan to Rhydyrnwyn, Wales

Billy Quinncroft (25 Dec 1991) - transferred to Bogor Raya FC, Indonesia

Adrian Uccchino (4 Oct 1991) - loan to AC Sangiovannese, Italy

Marc Warren (11 Feb 1992) - transferred to Sheffield United, England

Removed from database

Nahuel Arrarte (26 Nov 1980) - loan return to Marconi, NSWPL

Scott Bennett (30 Dec 1982) - transferred to non-league club, Scotland

James Chronopoulos (27 Oct 1987) - loan return to Marconi, NSWPL

Billy Darwich (7 Jan 1985) - loan return to Sydney Olympic, NSWPL

Nicolas Le Rouco (25 Sep 1988) - returned to Australia

Matthew Mayora (10 Mar 1986) - uncontracted

Angus McLachlan (8 Aug 1988) - transferred to non-league club, England

Daniel Severino (11 Feb 1982) - loan return to Bonnyrigg, NSWPL

LONDON CALLING



With Adam North in the UK

AND so you join us during the most exciting part of every Premier League season.

The race for the title is as hot as ever, the relegation dogfight looks like it could rumble on until the last game of the season, and the battle over European places looks as tight as ever. It appears all twenty league teams have something to fight for, each with their own specific story to tell about how their season has gone so far, and how they hope it will end in a few months.

But before we get into all of that in the coming weeks, I think it would be a good idea to cast our minds back just a couple of weeks ago. Back to what was arguably the most exciting January transfer window since its inception.

Now much of January passed quietly, with little action being conducted. That all ceased on the transfer deadline day, when the Premier League witnessed one of the most intriguing and absorbing transfer deals to be done. Of course I'm talking about Fernando Torres, Merseyside Legend in the making, deciding to up sticks and move down to London to join Chelsea. And with Liverpool having a gaping hole left up front for them then chose to replace the World Cup winning Spaniard with the Toon Army favourite Andy Carroll.

So in this massive triangle deal, which saw Torres pulling on a new blue shirt, Carroll a red, and Newcastle looking for a new number nine, who got the

best deal going?

Firstly I think it would be somewhat closed minded of me to simply ignore the astronomical figures which were involved in these transfers. Carroll went for £35 million, a record figure for a British player, and Torres went for £50 million. There was talk, as there often is in these circumstances, that these figures were ludicrous. As Britain and indeed much of the world struggle financially it seems almost offensive for these kinds of figures to be shuffled about almost like Monopoly money.

And not only are the figures themselves ridiculous, but they are much too high for the players that they represent. Andy Carroll, who is an undoubted talent who may one day lead the England attack, is apparently £1 million better than David Villa. So that is Carroll, whose had half a season in the English top flight, better than Villa, a man who near single headedly won several games at the World Cup for his country Spain, and who obviously went on to win the tournament.

And it's the same for Torres. Two years ago the figure, though substantial, would have been more acceptable. However now you're talking about a man who did not score at the World Cup, and who has been more than woeful for his club since the turn of 2010.

With that all being said though, I really do not think that the transfer sums involved should

The EPL Transfer Triangle

be an issue. It is arguable that the money is bad for the game as it leads to gross inflation, obviously bad for smaller clubs, yet some experts have recently put forward the idea that this money does trickle down to smaller clubs eventually, which is certainly a good thing.

One has to view football in its own little bubble; existing in a world of its own, made up of rich Saudi businessmen, shady agents with unscrupulous morals, and players with little to no loyalty. Football is a business, for better or for worse, and there is little the common fan can do to change that.

Now with the ethics of transfers discussed, I can move on to talk about how these moves will affect the clubs. Firstly let us think about Newcastle United, the proverbial runt of the litter. The Toon Army must have felt a little violated once Carroll had been confirmed as leaving, as although they did have a tidy £35 million in the bank, they had nobody to replace their top goal scorer. The man whose goals they were relying on to keep them in the league.

With that being said though, I don't think the fans need to panic. As their first game post-Carroll showed, as they drew 4-4 against title contenders Arsenal, they are capable of scoring. And there are at least three worse teams in the league of mediocrity than themselves, which means at the end of the season they should have Premier League security along with lots of money to invest in the club. So overall, it was actually a fairly good deal for those on Tyneside.

It may appear that Chelsea got the best deal, as they brought in a player whose goal scoring record for Liverpool was exceptional. However, the appropriate word in that last sentence is was. As



Grand Sale! Grand Sale! Grand Sale! Northa Melbourne, Brunswick, Footescray and now Stamford Bridge! Apparently some VPL clubs were pipped at the post for Fernando's signature...

I have said, it's been over a year since Torres has played well over a consistent basis, and believe me that is not a typo. For such a supposedly World Class player, Torres has shown bad touch and control, has looked out of sorts in front of goal, and perhaps most worrying is the fact that for long periods of time he simply hasn't been trying. He has looked unenthused and lethargic, and has I'm sure he will not be too sorely missed by Liverpool fans.

Of course, he could turn that all around in the blink of an eye at Chelsea, and I'm sure the fans will be hoping so. However it is not only Torres' form that is a concern, the purchase may also bring problems for boss Ancelotti. One worries that Torres may not be an Ancelotti signing, rather an impulsive acquisition by owner Roman Abramovich. It was this such a deal, in this instance in was buying Shevchenko, which forced Jose Mourinho

out the door, as 'The Special One' did not want the Ukrainian. I wonder in this case whether Ancelotti actually wanted Torres, and if he didn't whether it may cause him to give up on Chelsea and their domineering owner, just as Mourinho did a few years ago.

For me, the team that came out of the transfer saga the best was undoubtedly Liverpool. Indeed they lost one of their two most prized assets, but many Liverpool fans have reacted by stating the fact that he simply hasn't been any good for a long period of time. And in his place they have brought in a man with undoubted potential, who could evolve into being a Liverpool great himself. And not only that, the Reds also brought in Luis Suarez, a man who lit the World Cup alight with his displays for a very good Uruguay side. Of course one can never say for sure, but to me the sound

of a Suarez and Carroll partnership just sounds right. It hints at pace, power, technique, strength, movement, and most importantly, goals. And with the sale of Ryan Babel, combined with the cash from the Torres offload, Liverpool only came out of the transfer dealings with about £1 million deficit, which is not too bad.

So in the coming weeks and months I look forward to seeing just how these transfers play out. It'll be interesting to see if Torres erupts with class at Chelsea, whether Suarez and Carroll combine to great effect at Liverpool, and whether the loss of said Carroll will spell curtains for the now near striker-less Newcastle. In fairness, even if all three teams end up unhappy with their lot come the last game of the season, at least we'll always have the transfer deadline day to remember.

Real richest for sixth straight year

REAL Madrid has topped the league table of the world's 20 richest football clubs for the sixth straight year, according to Deloitte.

Its Football Money League, based on season 2009-10, also said the combined revenues of the 20 clubs had passed 4bn euros (£3.8bn) for the first time.

Real's arch-rival Barcelona retained second spot in the list while Manchester United remains third.

Manchester City was the biggest climber, up from 20th to 11th place. Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool were fifth, sixth and eighth respectively.

Seven of the top 20 in Deloitte's table were from England, the other three being Manchester City (11th), Tottenham Hotspur (12th), and Aston Villa (20th).

All the 20 clubs represented are from the 'big five' European leagues, with Germany contributing four clubs, Italy four, Spain three and France two.

In a further sign of a financial hierarchy at the top of the European game, the same 10 clubs populated the top 10 places in

the Money League for the second successive year.

And top six ranking places are identical to last year. Meanwhile, six of the top 10 have been in the money league top 10 in each of the last 10 years.

The authors said that Real may now be about to emulate the eight years spent by Manchester United at the top of the rich list, from the first edition in 1996-97, through to 2003-04.

They also said that they had expected to see the full impact of the global economic downturn on clubs during the 2009-10 season.

"We continued to assert that the game's top clubs would be well placed to meet these challenges given their large and loyal supporter bases, ability to drive broadcast audiences and continuing attraction to corporate partners," the report says.

"This was more than borne out by clubs' revenue performance in 2009-10."

Deloitte also says that the established large and loyal supporter bases and historic on-pitch success has "continued to underpin

the brand strength" of football's top clubs.

Real retained top position despite a disappointing season, coming second in La Liga again and being knocked out of the Champions League at the round of 16 stage by Lyon.

Yet the club was boosted by increased revenues from its three income streams of matchday monies, broadcasting and commercial.

Matchday revenues grew by 27 percent partly because Real hosted the Champions League final in 2010 at its Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

"In the coming years, particularly as UEFA's financial fair play rules take effect, Real Madrid's revenue prowess should, in theory, translate into a competitive advantage on the pitch," said the Deloitte report's editor, Dan Jones.

These UEFA rules are designed to force clubs in European competition to spend only what they earn.

"The much discussed implementation of UEFA's ... regulations from 2013-14 will not impact on

clubs' revenue generation, with the key principle underlying the regulations being that clubs do not spend more than they earn," Jones adds.

"Indeed, the regulations should help encourage clubs to identify and realise sustainable increased revenues."

Real's arch-rival Barcelona had a successful season, again winning La Liga and being crowned FIFA World Club champion.

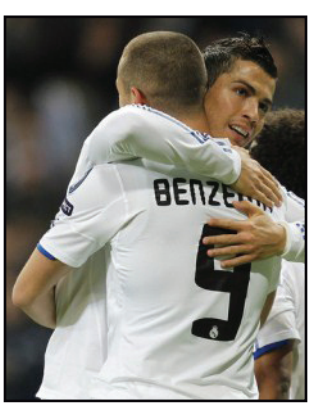
Manchester United had to be content with picking up the League Cup, as Chelsea secured a Premier League and FA Cup double.

"Despite the strengthening of sterling against the euro between 2008-09 and 2009-10, Barcelona have consolidated their second-placed position in the football money league, increasing their lead over Manchester United from 38.9m euros in 2008-09 to 48.3m euros," the report says.

The Deloitte review does not include the cost of transfer fees or player wages, or VAT and other sales taxes, and concentrates solely on day-to-day income from football business.

Income includes money from ticket sales, sponsorship, merchandising and other commercial revenues, television monies, corporate hospitality and non-matchday stadium use, such as for conferences.

— **BILL WILSON, business reporter, BBC News**



Lend us a peseta! Benzema helps himself to Ronaldo's back pocket.

Deloitte Money League	
1. Real Madrid, euros 438.6 million	
2. FC Barcelona, euros 398.1 million	
3. Manchester United, euros 349.8 million	
4. Bayern Munich, euros 323 million	
5. Arsenal, euros 274.1 million	
6. Chelsea, euros 255.9 million	
7. AC Milan, euros 235.8 million	
8. Liverpool, euros 225.3 million	
9. Internazionale, euros 224.8 million	
10. Juventus, euros 205 million	
11. Manchester City, euros 152.8 million	
12. Tottenham Hotspur, euros 146.3 million	
13. Hamburger SV, euros 146.2 million	
14. Olympique Lyonnais, euros 146.1 million	
15. Olympique de Marseille, euros 141.1 million	
16. Schalke 04, euros 139.8 million	
17. Atlético de Madrid, euros 124.5 million	
18. AS Roma, euros 122.7 million	
19. VfB Stuttgart, euros 114.8 million	
20. Aston Villa, euros 109.4 million	

SCARE THE OPPOSITION



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WAG OF THE WEEK



Natalie Fessi Age: 27
Scored with Carlos Tevez (Man City)



Couch Potato Dept.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEST



SBS 1
Monday February 14th
4:30 pm FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:30 pm The World Game

Wednesday February 16th
6:30 am UEFA Champions League - AC Milan v Tottenham
Hotspur. Live.

Thursday February 17th
6:30 am UEFA Champions League - AS Roma v Shakhtar Donetsk. Live.
10:05 pm UEFA Champions League Hour - All the highlights from the UEFA Champions League 2010/2011.

Friday February 18th
6:45 am UEFA Europa League - Sevilla v FC Porto. Live.

Sunday February 20th
10:30 am UEFA Europa League Highlights - Match highlights.
11:00 am Les Murray's Football Feature - Highlights from the UEFA Champions League.
12:00 pm UEFA Champions League Magazine Program - Highlights and news from the latest round of the UEFA Champions League
2:00 pm Nerds F.C.

SBS 2
Monday February 14th
9:30 pm The World Game

Wednesday February 16th
11:25 pm UEFA Champions League - Valencia v Schalke.

Thursday February 17th
6:30 pm UEFA Champions League - Arsenal v Barcelona

Saturday February 19th
7:00 pm UEFA Europa League - Napoli v Villarreal.



WEEK 27
Tues Feb 15 Fulham v Chelsea 6.55 am
Wed Feb 16 Birmingham v Newcastle 6.40 am

No fixtures on February 19-22 due to FA Cup 5th Round

WEEK 28
Sun Feb 20 West Brom v Wolves 10.55 pm
Wed Feb 23 Arsenal v Stoke 6.40 am Fox 1
Wed Feb 23 Blackpool v Tottenham 6.55 am Fox 2

WEEK 29
Sun Feb 27 Wigan v Manchester United 1.55 am
Sun Feb 27 Aston Villa v Blackburn 1.55 am Viewers Choice (Fox 2)
Sun Feb 27 Everton v Sunderland 1.55 am Viewers Choice (Fox 2)
Sun Feb 27 Newcastle v Bolton 1.55 am Viewers Choice (Fox 2)
Sun Feb 27 Stoke v West Brom 1.55 am Viewers Choice (Fox 2)
Sun Feb 27 Wolves v Blackpool 4.00 am (DELAY)
Mon Feb 28 West Ham v Liverpool 12.25 am
Tue Mar 1 Manchester City v Fulham 6.55 am
Wed Mar 2 Chelsea v Manchester United 6.40 am



Champions League football returns to our screens this week.



Monday 14th February
8:30 pm World Football News
2:45 am Football: Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 25: A.C Milan V Parma

Tuesday 15th February
6:00 am Football: Bundesliga Weekly Highlights Matchday 22
7:00 am World Football News (Rpt)
10:30 pm Liverpool TV Liverpool V Wigan Athletic

Wednesday 16th February
6:00 am Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 25: Brescia V Lazio
8:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show Matchday 25

Thursday 17th February
2:35 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt) Matchday 25
3:05 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt) Matchday 22
11:00 pm Arsenal TV Arsenal V Barcelona (Champions League)

Saturday 19th February
6:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show (Rpt) Matchday 25
6:30 am Arsenal TV (Rpt) Arsenal V Barcelona (Champions League)

Sunday 19th February
1:25 am LIVE: Bundesliga Matchday 23: Borussia Dortmund V St Pauli
4:00 am LIVE: Serie A Matchday 26: Bologna V Palermo



Monday 14th February
6:40am Serie A – Juventus vs Inter Milan LIVE
9:00am Serie A – Palermo vs Fiorentina
10:45am Serie A – Cesena vs Udinese
2:15pm Bundesliga – Cologne vs Mainz
4:00pm Serie A – Bari vs Genoa
5:45pm Serie A – Cagliari vs Chievo

Tuesday 15th February
1:00am Serie A – Catania vs Lecce
2:45am Portuguese Liga – Braga vs Porto
3:00pm Blue Square Premier – Mansfield vs Newport

Thursday 17th February
4:25am Serie A – Fiorentina vs Inter Milan LIVE
10:55am Copa Libertadores – Cruzeiro vs Estudiantes LIVE

Friday 18th February
12:30pm Serie A – Sampdoria vs Genoa

Saturday 19th February
6:25am Bundesliga – Nuremburg vs Frankfurt LIVE
11:25pm FA Cup Fourth Round Replay – Chelsea vs Everton LIVE

Sunday 20th February
1:10am FA Cup Fifth Round - Birmingham City vs Sheffield Wednesday LIVE
4:10am FA Cup Fifth Round –

Manchester United vs Crawley Town LIVE
6:40am Serie A – Inter Milan vs Cagliari LIVE
8:45am FA Cup Fifth Round – Stoke City vs Brighton
11:25pm SPL – Celtic vs Rangers LIVE

Monday 21st February
1:30am Serie A – Lecce vs Juventus
3:25am FA Cup Fifth Round – Leyton Orient vs Arsenal LIVE
6:40am Serie A – Napoli vs Catania LIVE



The Futbol Town Show
Every Monday 7pm

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Wednesday 8pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Saturday 10.00am

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am

Radio Stars

Global Football Show
Jacob Kagi and Ian Hooper discuss local, national and international football every Thursday night from 7.30-9pm on WA's SportFM 91.3.

The Four Diegos
Monday to Thursday 11pm SEN



SAXON SPORTS FRANKSTON NEW SEASON STARTS SOON!

5-A-SIDE SOCCER

Mens • Ladies • Mixed • Juniors

Watch a REPLAY of your game in the bar at full time!



WEE BILLY RAE

LANGWARRIN FC



FULL NAME: Billy Rae
BIRTHPLACE: Frankston, Victoria
BIRTH DATE: 7 August 2005
HEIGHT: Short
WEIGHT: Stocky
MARRIED: Are you serious?
CAR: Tonka
NICKNAME: Billy Baroo
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Plastic putter
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: Carrying the name Billy (both granddads' names)
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: My dad
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Kaka
FAVOURITE A-LEAGUE PLAYER: Archie Thompson
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: Jimmy Rooney
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Timmy Cahill
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: Scoring four goals against Langy girls' team on my fifth birthday
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: First Victory game
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: Any of the four on my birthday
EARLIEST FOOTBALL MEMORY: Simon O'Donnell knocking me off my feet with a 30 yard drive when I was just two years old
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: My head getting caught in the net the first time I played as a keeper
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Not scoring five goals on my fifth birthday
WORST INJURY: Net burn on my head
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: Zac from Doveton (cause he had yellow boots)
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Seaford
SUPERSTITIONS: Glasses off before I play
TYPICAL MATCHDAY MEAL: Nutri-Grain
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Ticker
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Ginger hair
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: Dundee (and I'm still growing!)
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Golf, cricket and AFL
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Buddy Franklin
FAVOURITE FOODS: Porridge
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: SpongeBob SquarePants and Ben 10
HOBBIES: Playing with any ball I can find
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Queensland
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: My mum's bed
IDEAL DATE: 7 August of any year cause I get lots of presents
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: SpongeBob SquarePants
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Justin Bieber
FAVOURITE FILM: Mask
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: Celtic PJs
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: Appearing in Goal! Weekly's Football Focus
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: Dad
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Not playing games every day
FOOTBALL AMBITION: To captain Dundee (dad made me say that)
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET: The editor of Goal! Weekly (that was part of the deal for me getting this whole page to myself)

PHOTO: DARRYL KENNEDY



TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

Tsigan Rolls One Up from the Central Coast!

With Mike Lilikakis

Le GIST
THERE are plebs out there who wonder why their existence is meaningless. There are champions out there just waiting for an opportunity to prove their worth.

Some dudes are just hanging out for half a chance to be noticed and have their mettle tested. There are others who spend half their known existence on FB, Tweet or chats while getting paid squillions to call up and hassle legends to sign, join, or Buff Up. Some of us have been backed into corners and given less time to do the things we need to do in order to eek out an existence...

It gets you to wondering. When we shuffle off this mortal coil and go the way with the wind and dust, did we contribute something to someone, somewhere over the rainbow? How much is that doggie in the window? Why are there more hairs on my back, and moreso coming out of my ears than on my head? Are your kids going to visit your grave and if they do, will they dance on it or leave plastic flowers so as to not come back except to celebrate the year of the Dragon? Truth be known, more people are concerned about just paying their bills, mortgages, credit cards and their secret dating sites, than they are about providing a legacy for their children to look and live up to.

The world is going to the dogs, and this country is fast approaching a revolution. Minorities have more say and pull in the way things are run, and the top dog is getting fatter, and hungrier. Sure we suffered a bit of a blowout, but the tyre was changed and the same model T is chugging along the glory road with a ticket to nowhere. Thankfully we here at Tsigantopia understand and empathise with you hard working, emo feeling, fat flinching, beer swilling, chevap eating wogs. We love you and will not leave you forsaken. Maybe broke, but not forsaken. So we have compiled a shortlist of three of the finest war-horses.

THE WARHORSES.
Visualise the picture if you have an imagination. If not, you will have to ask your partner for one, because after all they are stuck with the likes of you.

IMAGINE the fear, loathing, awe and grandeur of an armour clad warrior, sword drawn high, blood swirling through the air at every swift stroke of the razor sharp blade. And beneath said warrior, is a magnificent looking beast. Four legs, hooves a pummeling, stomping on, and bullying everything in its path. Its mane windswept, eyes full of frenzy, snot pouring out mixed with

steam from its nostrils...
Yea verily, a warrior without a horse is just another dude with a shtick. BUT, with a horse, the warrior becometh a legend. Behold, three fine specimens of Romper Stomper Clipping Clopper. These chaps have contributed to legenda, given their all in the line of duty, spilled blood on Gaia and made me laugh at least for a few seconds. And THAT is some achievement.

THE RACK
Take the youngest of the brood. The one we here at Tsigan FC affectionately call, "The RACK". Tome Racunica, Captain of the Springvale White Eagles, Living Legend of Perry Road, Last Bastion of Hope and Irony for the Mod Squad.

He has played nearly 300 first team games in a stellar Artois career, and averages at least two Chevap rolls after every session in The Keys Borough, innit. His mum and wife were to blame for his ba-looning to Jabba's Hutt proportion after he broke his ankle in a thousand places whilst going for a mad dash for a cash cow down the wing. His father and mentor offered him simple advice, "Ma, vots problem? You'll be right, dats nutting, This is Anfield, You'll never walk alone!"

So with oodles of motivation, and delusions of The Kop and being a Serbian verision of Jamie Carragher, he lost 40 pounds whilst working up a severe sweat by chasing opponents around the park and ripping their shirts, a la Libby style. With hopes and aspirations to keep the mighty Eagles flying in the VPL for many years to come and to be Champion loika Jose Mourinho, 'The Rack' isn't one to not cop a sniper or two.

He has a keen eye, and a razor sharp wit. "It's funny how mishaps get brought up from 5 years ago but all the good stuff is quickly fargoten." He prepares for battle by watching countless dvd's & youtube clips on future opponents. "Preparation is the key- I dont like surprises, not even on my birthday."

Coaching Juniors is something that tickles his fancy for the time being, with the Younglings keen to learn from their Captain Courageous. "I would trust everyones kids with my coaching, except my own..." In old school wog, "I look forward to coaching my kids and grandkids...They would get whats coming to them in the car on the way home."

When thinking about a possible early retirement he braces himself and yawps. He wants to shed a little more blood. There's far too many sheilas in football and he knows it. He just grits his teeth and looks for the next girlie man to smash. "There's at least 80% of these...



Springvale White Eagles captain Tome Racunica
Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

fake tans, manicures, pedicures & waxing... Im left shaking my head in disbelief." We're talking about a man who spent the vast majority of his youth on concrete football/basketball grounds by the Dalmatian sea, going through 4 pairs of runners weekly. Ah, those were the days.

Although his obsession with Jamie Carragher is purely professional, a cursatory glance at The Rack's mannerisms, demeanour, style and attitude exhudes Carra's class. When asked if he suffers fools or 'bad-asses', he coolly quips."Those types dont last long down at Perry Road, unless of course your name is Igor Stojanac."

When going into battle he would have none other than his own Legion of Doom; Krunoslav "Ronald" Stanisic at the front followed by Gordan "Go Go Mobile" Mrdic and Boris "BBB" Bajic alongside him.

VALHALLA VLAHOS
Take a scrapper with a knack for goals and a penchant for success and whaddya git? ANDY VLARHOSS.....335 games of spectacular, testicular, kati kati boutiqueleat.

Only a dude like him can shake off a bone spur in the ankle, have it operated on without anaesthetic by the worst surgeon in Melbourne (who was recommended by Ernie Merrick, to pousti) and whilst not fully recovered yet, can still run around with the best of them. On a bleak Sunday afternoon in 2003, he thought it in his best interests to head butt Buddy Farrah of the Woollongong Wolves. "It was terri-

Riding the Warhorses into the Sunset



Hume City's man in charge, Andy Vlahos.
Photo: DANIEL FLIS

premierships and a total of 6 best and fairests to stick in my yarda jordan with a 3 pointer...

When finally succumbing last season to a protruding disc L5, his rehab constituted of "re-learning Latin and watching Lone Wolf and Cub ad nauseum...then a punch on the nose would suffice or a reading from Sun Tzu's The Art of War".

But what does one truly say about a chap who, "did a 2 footer on Dad when I was 12, he was on compo for a year". Now that he's left Groin Gully and he's Player/Coach @ Whittlesea Ranges whilst coaching kids on the weekends, he has a little time to sit back and reflect on great moments of sport. Muhammed Ali, World Cup finals, Tiger Woods' handicap with big boobs... "Mate, there's too many malakies along the journey to mention but most involved my left peg."

He relaxes by reading labels off beers. Not like those fairy floss girlie men who strap on a piece and roll around screaming at the first tap on the ankle. "Yeah, i played with a few but I cant divulge their names for fear of incriminating myself although Mijo Trupkovic springs to mind...good looking bloke he was..."but that's not the problem with football. "Biggest challenge will be to make this great game the number 1 sport in Australia that is overcoming all the obstacles and prejudices we face from inside as well as outside forces...could go into a rant ala the Fuhrer at his mesmerizing best but shall fight my urges...nein, nein, nein..."

He credits his farzher and uncle Ian 'Hrvoje' Dobson as being his inspirations... "Learnt most from

the old man training with him... pampti pa vrati was a favourite lesson", There's nothing like a good book to make Dr. Fak unwind. "LOTR, Mandela's Long walk to Freedom, History of the Black Legion, Led Zep's autobiography to name a few..." ...and just to top it off, he sees himself at the tender age of 64, probably living outside the big smoke and hopefully coaching and God willing still playing, listening to the Beatles whilst considering retirement..."birthday greetings and a bottle of wine perhaps?..."

And who would he take to battle on the day of Armageddon? "Zoran 'TAB' Markovski, Peter 'pack a day' Psarros, Nick 'ouzo with a dash of coke' Palamaras, Nick 'let's hit the pokes' Tsaltas, Mathew 'the Colonel' Sanders, Brent 'bad egg' Fisher, Andy 'angry pills' Vargas... many more to mention but I got to go to the bottle shop...Elbows @ 10 paces... thank you and God bless.

Autobiography coming out soon entitled, "Do you know who I used to be?", and a sequel "Pampti pa vrati, the return of the Fak"...available at all bad book stores..."

Makes me want to hack off my legs, sell my jelly belly and start a dynasty with this unruly trinity. Therein lies the rub. Till next month, period or full moon;

I remain as ever;

NKVD
MC3
MP4

Tsigan UTD FC Forever



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Rooney wonder goal sinks Man City

EPL
DAY 27 of the Barclays Premier League played host to one of the most prestigious fixtures in English football; the Manchester derby, and it did not disappoint with a thrilling 2-1 win to the Red of Manchester thanks to an unforgettable bicycle kick from Wayne Rooney.

Manchester United hosted City at Old Trafford in front of 70,000 fans, many of them decked out in red. The game started slowly, with much of the possession for both sides being in the midfield, until the half hour mark when chances started arising.

Finally, on the stroke of half time Nani was fed in by a spectacular chip from Ryan Giggs and he coolly slotted the ball into the bottom right. However, on 65 minutes Edin Dzeko managed to get a scrambled shot away and it deflected off the back of David Silva, sending Edwin Van Der Sar the wrong way, as it hit the top left.

The moment of truth came in the 78th minute when Nani crossed in from the right and met Wayne Rooney, who went for a spectacular bicycle kick that soared into the top right, one of the best goals the league has seen, sealing the derby win for United and a step closer to their 19th title.

Meanwhile, at Emirates a Robin van Persie brace helped Arsenal overcome Wolves 2-0. Cesc Fabregas crossed the ball to the Dutchman and he volleyed low into the bottom right in the 16th. The sealer came in the 56th when Theo Walcott slid the ball into van Persie who drove the ball low into the goal for the win.



A sensational Wayne Rooney volley moves Manchester United seven points clear at the top of the Premier League table as they beat rivals Manchester City 2-1.

Elsewhere, a six goal thriller saw a 3-3 draw between West Brom and West Ham at the Hawthorns, in form Liverpool drew 1-1 with Wigan at Anfield which ended their four game winning streak, Blackpool drew 1-1 with Aston Villa. Birmingham overcame Stoke 1-0, Blackburn drew 0-0 with Newcastle and Tottenham pushed up into fourth as they look for a spot in Europe, knocking Chelsea out of Champions League qualification with a 2-1 away win over Sunderland

Ligue 1
A number of Ligue 1 games were played in France overnight and the results saw that many teams can still contest for the title from current leader toppers Lille OSC.

Firstly, Marseille saw a 2-1 win away over Sochaux which helped them leapfrog into second place from sixth. Likewise, Lyon moved into fourth spot

with a 4-1 away win over Saint-Etienne.

Paris Saint-Germain, however could only manage a 0-0 draw with Lens at home, which kept them in third spot.

Elsewhere, Arles Avignon drew 0-0 with Montpellier, defending champions Bordeaux's season has gotten worse with a 2-1 loss at home to Caen. Monaco beat Lorient 3-1 and Nancy overcame Auxerre 3-1.

Bundesliga
In Germany overnight Bayern Munich and Bayer Leverkusen enjoyed comfortable wins, with unstoppable league leaders Dortmund only managing a draw.

Bayern Munich demolished Hoffenheim 4-0 at home, which helped them move into third place and a 3-0 away win for Leverkusen at Frankfurt put them into second place. However, league leaders Dortmund still remain ten points ahead

of the second and third placed sides even though they only managed a 1-1 draw away to Kaiserslautern.

Elsewhere, Schalke defeated Freiburg 1-0 at home; Nurnberg enjoyed a 4-1 win over Stuttgart, Hamburger overcame Wolfsburg 1-0, who is struggling without star striker Edin Dzeko at Manchester City. Finally, Saint Pauli defeated Monchengladbach 3-1.

La Liga
In Spain, an entertaining clash between Atletico Madrid and Valencia ended in a late winner, a surprise result was seen between Sporting Gijon and Barcelona and an intense tug-of-war battle between Racing Santander and Sevilla, also saw a late winner.

Valencia travelled to Atletico Madrid and a third minute goal from Jose Antonio Reyes looked to give the home side an easy win, but on the 41st min-

ute Joaquin netted the equaliser. The game looked set for a draw until the 86th when Joaquin got his second and the winner, breaking Atletico's hearts.

Barcelona travelled to Gijon in search of an easy three points, but on the 16th the home side took the lead thanks to a David Barral goal. It took a chip from David Villa on 80 minutes to rescue Barcelona.

Lastly, Sevilla travelled to Santander and looked to be on the edge of another loss early when the home side scored twice in the first 20 minutes. But in the 41st minute Federico Fazio narrowed the margin just before the half. Luis Fabiano then looked to snatch a point in the 83rd when he netted a goal, but in the 92nd minute a late winner from Arana stole the celebrations from the visitors.

Serie A
In the Serie A overnight the top two sides AC Milan and Napoli kept up the standard in Italy, both enjoying comfortable wins. The two wins cancel each other out so to speak, with only three points between first and second and no ground being made by Napoli as Milan continue to look likely to win the Scudetto in this game for game situation

Milan demolished Parma 4-0 at home thanks to goals from Clarence Seedorf, Antonio Cassano and a brace from Robinho and Napoli overcame Roma 2-0 away thanks to a brace from Edinson Cavani, which affects Roma's chances for Europe qualification as they sit in seventh.

EPL			
	P	GD	Pts
1 Man Utd	26	32	57
2 Arsenal	26	29	53
3 Man City	27	19	49
4 Tottenham	26	9	47
5 Chelsea	25	24	44
6 Liverpool	27	3	39
7 Sunderland	27	0	37
8 Bolton	26	-1	33
9 Stoke	26	-2	33
10 Newcastle	26	2	32
11 Blackburn	27	-8	32
12 Fulham	26	0	30
13 Everton	25	-1	30
14 Birmingham	25	-8	30
15 Aston Villa	27	-15	30
16 Blackpool	26	-11	29
17 West Brom	26	-17	27
18 Wigan	27	-18	27
19 West Ham	27	-18	25
20 Wolves	26	-19	24
Arsenal 2-0 Wolves			
Birmingham 1-0 Stoke			
Blackburn 0-0 Newcastle			
Blackpool 1-1 Aston Villa			
Liverpool 1-1 Wigan			
Man Utd 2-1 Man City			
Sunderland 1-2 Tottenham			
West Brom 3-3 West Ham			

Bundesliga			
	P	GD	Pts
1 TSG Hoffenheim	3	6	9
2 Hamburg	3	3	7
3 Hannover 96	3	2	7
4 FC Kaiserslautern	2	4	6
5 Mainz	2	3	6
6 B Dortmund	3	2	6
7 SC Freiburg	3	0	6
8 B M'gladbach	3	-1	4
9 B Leverkusen	3	-1	4
10 Werder Bremen	3	-1	4
11 Bayern Munich	3	-1	4
12 E Frankfurt	3	1	3
13 St Pauli	2	1	3
14 Nuremberg	3	-1	2
15 Wolfsburg	3	-4	0
16 Cologne	2	-4	0
17 Schalke 04	3	-4	0
18 VfB Stuttgart	3	-5	0
Bayern Munich 4-0 TSG Hoffenheim			
Eintracht Frankfurt 0-3 Bayer Leverkusen			
FC Kaiserslautern 1-1 Borussia Dortmund			
Schalke 04 1-0 SC Freiburg			
St Pauli 3-1 Borussia M'gladbach			
VfB Stuttgart 1-4 Nuremberg			
Wolfsburg 0-1 Hamburg			

Serie A			
	P	GD	Pts
1 AC Milan	25	25	52
2 Napoli	25	18	49
3 Inter Milan	23	17	44
4 Lazio	24	8	42
5 Palermo	24	11	40
6 Udinese	24	9	40
7 Roma	24	3	39
8 Juventus	24	10	38
9 Cagliari	24	2	32
10 Chievo	24	3	31
11 Fiorentina	23	-1	29
12 Bologna	23	-5	29
13 Genoa	23	-3	28
14 Sampdoria	23	-5	27
15 Parma	25	-11	26
16 Lecce	24	-19	24
17 Catania	24	-12	23
18 Brescia	24	-11	22
19 Cesena	24	-14	21
20 Bari	24	-25	14
AC Milan 4-0 Parma			
Roma 0-2 Napoli			

La Liga			
	P	GD	Pts
1 Barcelona	23	59	62
2 Real Madrid	22	33	54
3 Valencia	23	13	47
4 Villarreal	22	19	45
5 Athletic Bilbao	22	6	38
6 Espanyol	22	0	37
7 Sevilla	23	-3	31
8 Atletico Madrid	23	1	30
9 Getafe	22	-2	30
10 Real Sociedad	22	-4	28
11 Mallorca	22	-6	28
12 Racing	23	-13	25
13 Sporting Gijon	23	-8	23
14 Real Zaragoza	22	-13	23
15 Osasuna	22	-8	22
16 Hercules	22	-14	22
17 Deportivo	22	-15	22
18 Levante	22	-11	21
19 Almeria	22	-15	20
20 Malaga	22	-19	18
Atletico Madrid 1-2 Valencia			
Racing Santander 3-2 Sevilla			
Sporting Gijon 1-1 Barcelona			

Prosinecki Joins Red Star

By ALEX MILIC

THE biggest news during the winter break from the Balkans has been the appointment of Robert Prosinecki as Red Star manager. The Croatian is a legend of the famous club having won The European Cup with the Belgrade team in 1991.

His appointment has caused a big stir in both Serbia and Croatia. Prosinecki was working as Assistant coach to Slaven Bilic in the Croatian National Team and this move has been welcomed by his colleagues but fans in Croatia have mixed reactions. A majority see it as an act of betrayal but a small part is happy for the leg-

endary midfielder.

Prosinecki was let go by his youth club Dinamo Zagreb as a 17 year old by then manager Miroslav Blazevic who would later be his coach for the Croatian National Team. Red Star picked up the talented midfielder and he excelled with the Belgrade giants, winning every trophy possible and was named Young player of the tournament at the 1990 World Cup in Italy.

He would go on to play for both Real Madrid and Barcelona before returning to Dinamo and later Portsmouth where he was also a club legend.

Prosinecki has promised an attacking style of play and has long



Robert Prosinecki takes charge at powerhouse Red Star Belgrade.

term plans for the Serbian giants. The players have welcomed the move and are in awe of Prosinecki's training techniques. This was a big decision by the biggest

club in the region and hopefully Robert succeeds as manager as much as he did as a player with Red Star.



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25

Zebras canter to easy Summer Cup win

By Walter Pless

TASMANIA

TILFORD Zebras took the scoring honours on the opening day of the Summer Cup competition in southern Tasmania on Saturday when they thrashed Taroona 9-2 at Olinda Grove to go to the top of Group A.

Jayden Welch hit a hat-trick for the Zebras. Their other scorers were Andrew Telega, Daniel Lapolla, Ricky Self, Jonathon Ladic, Brett Andrews and Dwayne Walsh.

Taroona replied through Hugo Luttmer and a ferocious drive by Hamish Macgregor.

University are second on goal-difference after they beat Beachside 2-1 through goals by Nigel Blundell and Ahmed Alquahtani. Jamon Pennicott replied for Premier League newcomers Beachside.

Kingborough Lions United are top of Group C after downing DOSA 6-0 at Olinda Grove.

David Cooper, signed in the summer from South Hobart, netted a hat-trick within 25 minutes, while Kingborough's other goals came from Marcello Marchioli, who scored twice, and Tom McDonald.

In the other Group C match,

Olympia Warriors beat Hobart United 6-1, with Brady Cronk and Josh Fielding each netting twice and Nektar Vavoulas and Nick Meredith once each.

This was Olympia's second win in competitive matches in successive weeks - they won 1-0 in the northern Tasmanian Steve Hudson Cup competition last week - and is in stark contrast to their wretched form last year.

Peter Otto scored First Division Hobart United's consolation goal.

Cup holders South Hobart recovered from an early set-back to beat Clarence United 2-1 in Group B.

Nathan Rees gave the Eastern Shore side an early lead from the penalty spot before two stunning goals by Kostas Kanakaris and Jim Pennicott gave the points to South Hobart.

In Group D, Glenorchy Knights beat New Town Eagles 3-2 in a penalty shoot-out after the teams drew 2-2 in the regulation 90 minutes.

Eagles went 2-0 up through goals by Ben Whitehall and Jamie Vernon. They should have had a third, but Adam McKeown's effort was disallowed for a foul on the keeper.

Brendan Garth pulled a goal back for the Knights just before the interval.

Eagles should have extended their lead further, but Knights keeper Ben Peter saved Jacob Clamp's penalty.

A wild melee midway through the second half saw Eagles' Simon Strang and Knights' Garth dismissed by referee Ian Colhoun.

Andrew Robb headed home Matthew Nowicki's corner 11 minutes from the end to make it 2-2 and ensure the points would be decided by spot-kicks.

In the penalty shoot-out, Robb, Nowicki and Tom Sherman netted for the Knights, while only Mark Page and Vernon were on target for Eagles.

Jackson Marsh and Jacob Huigsloot missed for the Knights, as did Whitehall, Adam McKeown and Clamp for Eagles.

In the cross-over match between Groups B and D, Metro easily accounted for fellow Division One side Nelson Eastern Suburbs 4-0.

Lars Engisch and Jeremy Morris fired Metro into a 2-0 half-time lead before second-half strikes by Adam Woodward and Daniel Brown completed Metro's win.

In the Steve Hudson Cup in northern Tasmania on Saturday, Ulverstone beat Launceston United 6-4, while Riverside Olympia downed Northern Rangers 4-2.



Glenorchy Knights' Andrew Robb heads a corner home against New Town Eagles to make it 2-2. Photo: WALTER PLESS

Carlsberg Cup Shows Promise

By Nat Adamopoulos

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

WITH the 2011 South Australian Men's football season due to kick off on the 26th March, the Football Federation of South Australia has secured the sponsorship of brewer Carlsberg for its preseason competition which has already showed some promising young talents arise from good quality matches.

Having a sponsor put their name to a competition undoubtedly adds to the credibility and Carlsberg is right up there with the best of them as one of the leading sponsors of football around the world, sponsoring international tournaments and renowned teams such as Liverpool and Hamburg SV..

Once upon a time, long long ago clubs would organize their own inter-club trial matches to 'ease' their sides into the season proper, giving the players a run before they needed to be at the ready. This gave coaches the opportunity to toy with their squads, give youngsters a run and see what depth their sides had and what they had to work with.

Gone are those days of easing into a season, as clubs now basically have the core of their squads chosen before the end of each year, coaching staff and personnel appointed with training commencing as the year starts, sometimes earlier.

Yes, the preseason competitions of yesteryear that were not really taken too seriously are all but gone and nowadays clubs look forward to good quality competition to get the juices flowing for the season proper. It is still a time for coaches to look at their up and coming youngsters and tweak their sides until they get the right combination of youth and experience to be successful.

The Cup competition is structured with thirty teams competing in five groups of six teams that play five rounds of games over five weeks.

The top team in each group qualifies for the finals along with the



Adelaide Galaxy's Shaun McGreevy prepares to shoot as Salisbury United keeper Corey Van Paridon and C. Irvine try to protect their lines. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

next three best performing sides that play out qualification and semi-final games, culminating in a Grand Final on 12th March held at the new FFSA facilities at Burton. Games have been split across the week to enable more punters to get out and see what's out there which is a great initiative.

After being able to use that opportunity to get out and film six games in two rounds already, its great to see where changes have been made and the chess moves of coaches, players and superstars. I can say that season 2011 looks very promising with a lot of young guns already making their mark and getting into the spotlight.

Of course there are those that are to come back to their respective clubs after playing for Adelaide United Youth Team, obviously highly talented players. But one player that has caught my lens of the camera is Ian Kamau who plays for Adelaide Blue Eagles. I have been following this young lad for a number of years now, coming from Adelaide City playing a role as captain in the U17's, U19's and Reserves.

This lad plays an extremely mature

game of football hard to believe he is still so young yet holds his own on the pitch. He is a speedy creative attacking player that outsmarts his opponents time and time again and looks to be the goods.

Notable changes in coaching roles are Rocky Aloisi leaving Campbelltown City Red Devils and moving down two divisions to take the helm at Salisbury United Berries in the State League.

This now puts him in a unique position of facing up to his own son Ross as an opposing coach in Round 1 of the State League as Salisbury take on West Adelaide, a game that I will be going out to film. Taking Rocky's place at the Red Devils is star striker Jason Trimboli who will be debuting as a Senior Super League Coach, taking a coaching playing role for the year.

The biggest loss undoubtedly is of Adelaide Blue Eagles Coach Zoran Karadzic who flew out for Indonesia over the Christmas break after accepting a 2 year contract as an assistant coach to Branko Babic an ex coach of his. Vojo Glusevic has been appointed first team coach at ABE in his place. Karadzic will be

missed by all...players, administration and supporters alike as he was a man that really got face to face with everyone and had a certain charisma and character about him.

Watch this space to see how the Carlsberg Cup progresses leading up to the Final and the eventual start of the 2011 Devine Homes Football Season.

Carlsberg Cup Round 3 RESULTS
Gawler 0 v 1 Cobras (P. Karittevlis);
Campbelltown 3 (Trimboli , Parhas, Totani) v 0 Playford;
Northern Demons 2 (Keane 2) v 1 NAB (Viscariello);
Western Strikers 3 (D'Alfonso, Mc Neill, Barbaro) v 1 Cumberland;
Noarlunga 2 (McCardle, Cooper) v 4 Comets (Voss Piotto, Fleetwood, Zerillo, Mitchell);
Modbury 2 (Rocco, Pearce) v 1 Pirates (J. Mavromatis).
Metro Stars 4 (Matricciani, Tunbridge, Mettyear) v 0 Adelaide Olympic;
Seaford 2 (Dickinson, Brown) v Sturt 1 (Hume);
Para Hills 3 (Tobias, Catanzaro, Clayton) v 3 White City (Ribiero, Keens, Pollock);
Adelaide Galaxy 4 (McGreevy 1, A Taylor 3) v Salisbury United 1 (Stam);
Adelaide Blue Eagles: 3 (C. Bugeja 2, E. Kounavelis) 1 Croydon (Not Given);
West Adelaide 6 (Z Walker 5, K Zefi) Western Toros 1 (A Kazzetta);

By Jarrod Ellis

QUEENSLAND

MARCH 12th is the kick-off date for the 2011 season of the QSL and preparations have been underway for months now as clubs gear up for the opening rounds.

2011 marks an exciting time for the league with two new entrants having been approved by Football Queensland. Gold Coast Stars and Southern Cross United will be making their debuts

Football Queensland CEO Geoff Foster was thrilled at the announcement of the expanded league and had high hopes that the new clubs would contribute further to a burgeoning relationship between the QSL and Queensland's A-League clubs.

"I have no doubt that strengthening the Hyundai Queensland State League will in turn strengthen the Queensland teams participating in the A-League, Foster stated.

"These teams rely heavily on the Hyundai Queensland State League to groom their players for the big time, so if that competition becomes stronger then the players will improve which is what those teams will be looking for.

"More teams in the Hyundai Queensland State League means more talented young players benefiting from playing a higher level of football in Queensland".

Alex Srhoj, Football Operations Manager for FNQ Bulls has no doubts the expansion will greatly benefit all stakeholders within the Hyundai Queensland State League and he believes the competition needs to grow to in order to improve Football right across the state.

"You definitely need to introduce new teams into the competition," he said.

"A state league needs to be exactly that, a competition that

includes teams from across the entire state and I think a 10 team competition is a step in the right direction in representing all of Queensland."

"There are plenty of people out there longing for quality Football all year round, and the expansion of the Hyundai Queensland State League will provide more games for these fans.

Neither club are yet to finalise squads but Gold Coast have announced that they will be captained by former Socceroo Craig Moore, a move that already gives the new club an air of respectability.

Whilst not boasting a former Australian captain in their squad Southern Cross United have their own Brisbane Roar connection through newly announced coach Josh McCloughan. The post will be the former Roar defender's first coaching position and believes his playing experience will provide the perfect launching pad for his coaching career.

"Too many players get road blocked with their football career in Australia and I believe that Southern Cross United understands what the FFA is implementing and I want to be a part of it," McCloughan said.

"The excitement of the committee in their endeavour to market the game to the public is one of the aspects that I know the players will enjoy."

In further off season developments that will benefit both new and old clubs of the QSL, Football Queensland announced a partnership between The Hyundai Queensland State League and Australia's national airline QANTAS.

The partnership will see all players and officials fly exclusively with Qantas throughout the state for participation in the Hyundai Queensland State League.



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Tommy Docherty

With Roy Hay

Thomas Henderson Docherty, the fast talking Scot, who claimed he had more clubs than Jack Nicklaus, played with Joe Marston, Tom Finney and Willie Forbes at Preston North End, and coached Sydney Olympic and South Melbourne Hellas in a career which was full of controversy and some achievements. He managed Scotland and Manchester United, winning the F A Cup in 1977, but leaving the Red Devils under a cloud after an affair with the wife of the physio at the club, whom he later married.

He was born in the Gorbals in Glasgow in 1928 when the suburb was at its toughest between the wars. So survival on the streets made you grow up fast and Docherty learned survival skills and a political ruthlessness that underlay his repartee and infectious humour. He never lost the common touch and I remember travelling back into central London with him after an England versus Scotland game at Wembley in 1977, which he had attended as a fan. He chatted away to everyone, reducing the whole carriage to stitches with his observations about players and officials.

He had a few games with Celtic but moved to Preston in 1949 and played over 300 games for the club during the next decade, including the 1954 F A Cup final. He then had three seasons at Arsenal and wound down as a player at Chelsea where he started his managerial career. It was while he was at Chelsea that he made his first visit to Australia with the team in 1965. That side included Peter Bonetti, John Hollins, Terry Venables and a young Peter Osgood. Chelsea drew twice with Australia but hammered most of the state sides, apart from Victoria where it scraped home by a goal to nil. There is a suggestion that Docherty pulled on the boots to play a game for Prague in Sydney that year, but I have not been able to trace that match.

Docherty left Chelsea in 1967 and began a round of club appointments in England and Portugal, before being appointed Scotland manager in 1971. He revitalized the national side, though he had some problems to deal with. He said, 'I remember calling off our first practice match because no one could get the ball off wee Jimmy Johnstone.' In 1972 Matt Busby and Louis Edwards recruited Docherty to take over at Manchester United, where he had to deal with the conclusion of the careers of three legends, George Best, Bobby Charlton and Denis Law. The last of these was forced

out to cross-town rival Manchester City, for whom he scored in his final match against United when the club was relegated in 1973. Docherty brought the club back up in one season but could not win the league, and lost the 'unloseable' F A cup final to Southampton in 1976 only to beat Liverpool the following year to lift the trophy.

After spells at Derby County and Queens Park Rangers, Docherty came to Australia to coach Sydney Olympic in 1981. He did not have an auspicious start going down to Wollongong City by three goals to one with this line-up: Gary Meier, Danny Moulis, Greg Ankudinoff, Ken Wilson, Derek Laing, Jim Ziras, Peter Katholos, Hussein Housseini, Mark Koussas, Graham Jennings, David Cork and Mike Cross. He coached for the first 17 rounds that year but then returned to England to take over at Preston in June 1981.

In May 1982 the Doc was back in Australia, this time at South Melbourne where he replaced John Margaritis. The Hellas squad included: Peter Laumets, Gerry Bennett, Steve Blair, Arthur Xanthopoulos, Socrates Nicolaides, John Stevenson, Branko Buljevic, Alan Davidson, Jim Shirra, Charlie Egan, Alun Evans and George Campbell. Hellas had only won four games when he took over and he got them to sixth in the league, but they did not make the play-offs. Hellas won the Victorian Ampol Cup, the only trophy Docherty won in his time in Australia.

For 1983 Sydney Olympic came calling again, but Docherty's second coming also began with a loss, this time by the only goal to West Adelaide in the Greek derby. The Olympic squad now included: Peter Wilson, Martyn Rogers, Ricky Herbert, Tony Dakos, Graham Jennings, Jim Ziras, Peter Raskopoulos, Jim Patikas, Peter Katholos, Gary Phillips and Marshall Soper. A Soccer Action poll concluded that Olympic was the most entertaining team in the league. But that was not enough to save the Doc. His last game was on 21 August in another one-nil loss, this time to St George. He was succeeded by Manfred Schaefer. So he did not last a full season in any of the three years he spent in Australia. In all, he coached 54 games, for 22 wins and 12 draws.

Ricky Herbert, current coach of the All Whites and Wellington Phoenix, who played in the World Cup finals with New Zealand in 1982 was brought to Olympic by Docherty in 1983. 'It was Tommy who was mainly responsible for luring me to Olympic: now he has gone I don't know where I stand.'

Those who know Docherty well speak of his infectious enthusiasm

The Doc in Oz



Docherty with Sydney Olympic. Was he coaching them or telling them stories? Photo: Les Shorrock. Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Tommy Docherty (right) and Alun Evans. Photo: Les Shorrock. Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Docherty in the dug-out. Photo: Les Shorrock. Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.

and his ability to inspire individuals and teams, but feel that his tactical sense was not the greatest and that he could be capricious and cutting with his choice of players. But while the Doc was around the game was always interesting on and off the field. Since he retired he has played to his strength as an after-dinner speaker with a never-ending fund of stories about the game and its participants.



Tommy Docherty and the F A Cup in 1977. The Manchester United players are Brian Greenhoff, Lou Macari and Martin Buchan. Source: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



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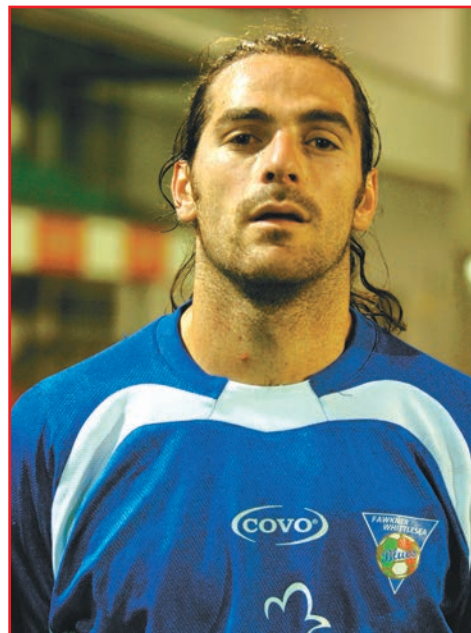
TOMORROW'S NEWS, TODAY.



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James Holland (AZ Alkmaar)



Sasa Ogrenovski (Seongnam)



Adrian Zahra (Melbourne Heart)



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